

SIXTINE ROME

J · A · F · ORBAAN







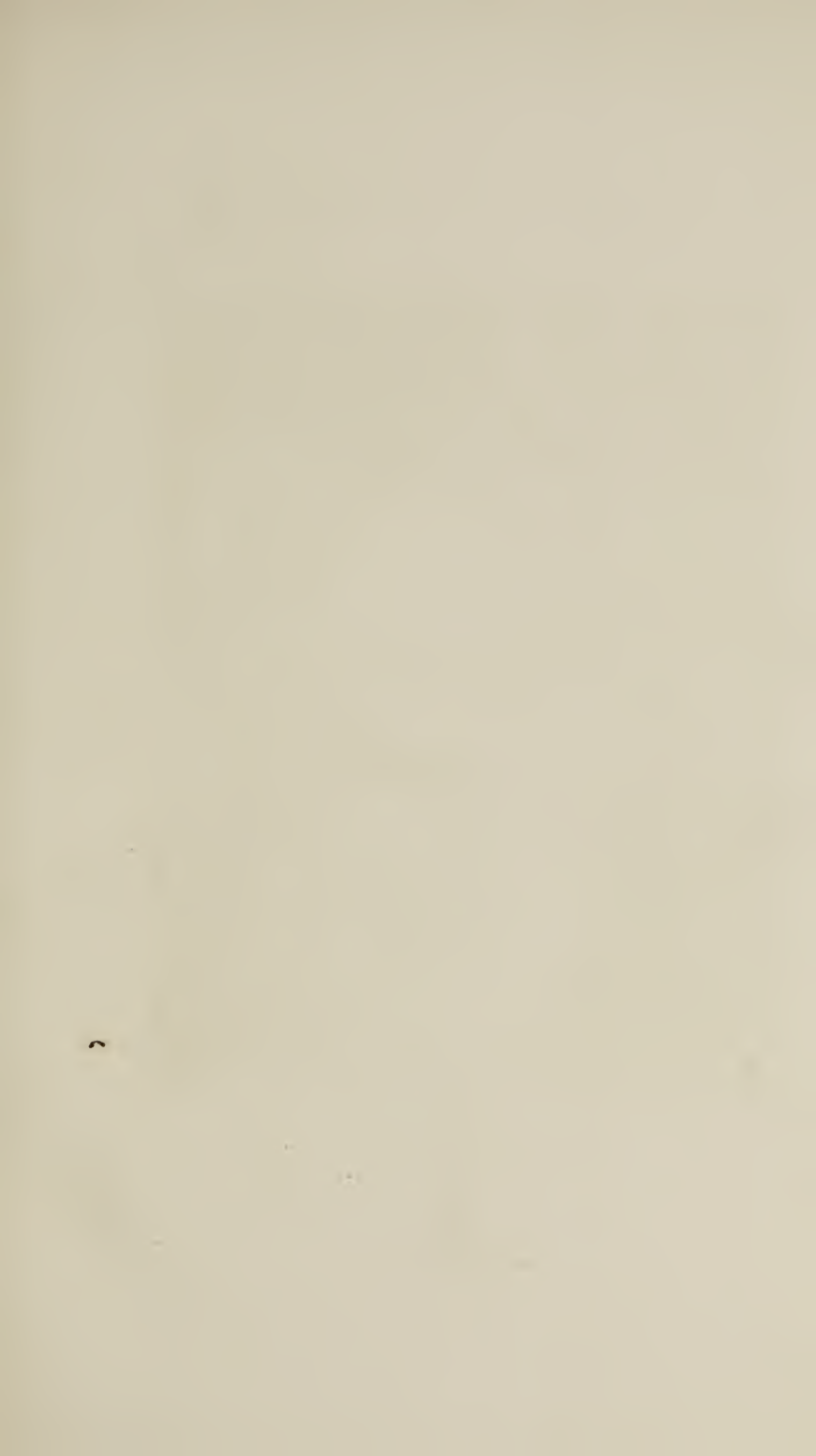


SIXTINE ROME



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*Sixtus V receiving Fontana.  
from a painting in the Vatican Library*

# SIXTINE ROME

BY

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WITH 33 ILLUSTRATIONS

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# SIXTINE ROME

## I

### PORTA FURBA

HOW often it happens that a cause of which one is hardly conscious, a small bit of mosaic or a print accidentally seen in the window of an antiquarian, gives the slight impetus which starts the desire for discovery. A name appears like a luminous sign, not merely one out of many in the dull, tedious list of the guide-book, but as some brilliant visitor suddenly announced, one of the bright comets which occasionally light up wide fields of civilisation.

The impulse may come in a cosy room lined with books, a lighted lamp on the table among a few portfolios full of engravings, and one of the superficial Roman wood-fires ready to burn in the fireplace. Outside, the "Tramontana," the vivid north wind, growing calm as the night advances. The heels of passers-by as they hurry along, wrapped in their mantles, sound quick and loud

on the white pavement, its crystalline specks glittering in the moonlight.

Why is the night so peculiarly full of charm, the room so inviting? and why are the books so delightfully attractive?

Only for this reason: one of the many Romes in Rome awaits to be discovered. Perhaps it has already been discovered a thousand times, or it may be that the discovery will prove only a weak supposition. That is all the same, for it is measured according to the potentiality of the mind which conceives it. A Shelley will make his Cenci; a Bulwer a Cola Di Rienzi, and inspiration may be given to one who writes a letter home about his evening. No doubt it ends, in many cases, in a dreamy hour in an armchair, while the fire burns low and the sounds outside die away, until the neighbouring bells solemnly strike midnight.

Yet, he whose silent nights have known the intimacy of the Rome of the past will carry with him through life its beautiful remembrance, and be for ever grateful to the moment of his inspiration. His strongest feeling will be regret for unsolved enigmas and for many evenings wasted which might have been spent, not in dwelling upon great historical questions of Roman antiquity, but upon less complicated subjects, which strike the fancy with an invincible curiosity, create an atmosphere of mystery, and call forth a very powerful interest.



ROMA.



Imagine a huge, lonely mass of brick, an interrogation point in the bareness of the Campagna; a lonely house, a tower, . . . but those broken relics are too numerous. In their wild and fallen state they seem almost to return to the soil from which they grew; their antiquity has outlived itself. The effect is the opposite of what often happens with a wall of clouds, or a line of rocks; we gaze at their capricious outlines in the distant sky, seeking for the profile of some building. On the contrary, many of the antiquities of the Campagna dissolve before our eyes, and become one with the landscape. This submerging of the past, this fading away of beautiful scenery into the floor of the stage, is at the extreme limit of our understanding. It is too difficult to distinguish an ancient building from an occasional heap of stones. Even against our wish the eye grows tired and the fancy wanders from those frontier marks between History and Nature.

The Roman evening opens with very different reminiscences of the day, reminiscences of an extinguished life that we can still grasp and will at least try to reconstruct. The interrogation marks are soon arranged in their order.

There is no better method to ensure an evening of fruitful investigation than to take a walk after sunset in Old Rome, between the Corso and the Tiber. There is no danger at all, except perhaps



in a few little streets, which announce themselves sufficiently as the Suburra of modern Rome. In a few minutes you will be lost—that is absolutely certain. I envy you that privilege. It is almost prosaic to know one's way round every corner of the ancient city. In your wanderings, you will happen on some square or bridge which you know, and return thence with a provision of questions.

The itinerary has been a strange one. Reproduced on the map, it would show a fantastic line with many angles, circles, and spirals; and yet the wanderer, puzzled by the intricate network of streets two yards wide, has not twice observed the same expression on apparently the same Madonna. He remembers that he passed many times the same kind of doorway, but is uncertain as to whether he did not retrace his own footsteps. Probably it was a different place where the identical design was repeated. The doorway is very Roman, being composed merely of blocks, roughly carved in two parallel lines, closing above in the half-circle of an arch. Once his attention has been drawn to ornamentation of this kind, he finds such doors innumerable; as also windows closed outside with strong iron bars curving towards the summit, and marble benches attached to the basement of ancient palaces. The next house again has pillars of granite or marble with Ionian capitals partly embedded in the wall and

in the ground. They really carry the upper story of the building. But why are they walled inside? Were they not strong enough to bear the light weight above them? Was it necessary to plant them deep in the ground? Other antiquities will arouse your interest when looking into some corridor or courtyard. An irregular little museum of marble fragments, with inscriptions or bas-reliefs, is attached with iron clasps, or cemented in the whitewashed wall of more than one house, indifferently passed by. In one place, the light of a lantern reaches high enough to show, on a façade, blurred mythical scenes, painted in brown, black, white, and yellow, apparently the remnants of gilding. You remember also to have passed several inviting, shop-like offices, with walls of books bound in old parchment. A lamp draws a narrow cone under the green shade and lights up an old man's head and the paper which he is covering with neat calligraphy. In a line along the wall, dignified, pensive people are sitting in old-fashioned chairs, addressed by another man of the same type as the writer, but more refined and with authority in his gestures. The proprietor is somewhat of a scientific dealer. The mental attitude of the learned customers, standing and sitting around in the little store, is shown by the eager interest and sincere love with which they handle the dusty books.

And there is still another mystifying shop

presenting the peculiarities of a pharmacy—peculiarities you must notice as being very Italian and very æsthetic. In some chemists' shops can be seen sets of Majolica jars of great artistic value. They have thus stood in ordinary use for centuries, while their contemporaries adorn the cabinet of some collector of antiquities. In a collection, their shortened Latin inscription takes the air of a magic formula; here they only assist in guiding the hand of the pharmacist in making balms and drugs of centenary reputation and effective healing power for past and present generations.

This does not account for the little company of grave gentlemen, who watch with a certain indifference the handling of these costly ceramics.

If they were antiquarians their hearts would tremble, but their appearance shows no sign of inward tremor.

You will find no such group in a neighbouring store of articles of a similar kind. Over the door is written "Semplicista." There "semplicia" (medical herbs) are sold, whereas the pharmacist deals out chemical substances or more specially prepared herbs and minerals. Painted wooden boxes of the time of Dr. Johnson contain these remedies. The owner of this stock of health is alone.

A grill-room, offering a large view to the street, recalls the Middle Ages. Under the spacious chimney whole rows of chickens and many half-

sheep are revolving slowly over a glowing fire. A complicated engine, which would already in the XVI<sup>th</sup> century have excited the admiration of Montaigne, the first of modern tourists, sets this gastronomical array in motion. When the coal is brought in, the primitive baskets of plaited laths in which it is carried will seem familiar to many . . . the frescoes of Giotto in Santa Croce in Florence will come to your memory. This is Italy. But the mediæval coal-basket is very recent compared to the scales still used in ordinary Roman stores, of which you can find the model in a glass case in the Capitoline Museum, and the potteries which trace perhaps much farther back than classical Roman times, and whose models are in common use at the present day.

A view of a courtyard remains in one's mind. Just a flickering light from a few candles, reflected on carriage-panels undergoing the operation of cleaning after a dusty country drive. A Cardinal's evening by the Tiber perhaps.

Many pleasant questions trouble the stranger, only to remain unanswered. He finds in the usual antique models and living tradition certain explanations . . . but the attractive side remains unsolved.

Take, for instance, the Roman doorway, with its rough stone blocks. It is not difficult to find its model. The Coliseum itself presents the arch closed with the keystone. A portfolio of old



prints demonstrates clearly that this typical doorway belonged to times before carriages were in use, or, later on, to houses which did not possess that luxury. The introduction of vehicles in the second half of the XVI<sup>th</sup> century altered the "portone," the gateway of palaces. They might be small and narrow when everybody rode on horseback . . . even Popes and Cardinals, as is shown, for instance, on the tombstone of Pope Hadrian VI in Santa Maria dell' Anima. Later the gateway had to allow for the entrance of broad carriages; its opening took up a large space in the façade and changed its whole architectural plan. Compare the narrow entrance of the Palazzo Massimo—(beginning of XVI<sup>th</sup> century)—with the spacious entrance of the Palazzo Doria—(end of XVI<sup>th</sup> century).

The custom of guarding ground-floor windows with a covering of strong twisted iron still exists in Rome. New houses have imitated them, with or without the curved effect, in order to look out more easily from the prison-like rooms. In former times the streets of Rome were not lighted, and the worthy citizens had to carry their own lanterns; or else a servant lighted them on their way through the winding streets with a candle or a torch. They left behind them impenetrable darkness when the full moon did not sketch in black and white the sharp outlines of the palaces. Houses had to protect themselves.



Modern buildings also occasionally have ancient fragments of inscriptions and bas-reliefs walled in the corridor and courtyard. The origin of those little private museums is very natural. When digging for the foundations, some marble fragments were found. It was the obvious thing to use them as an ornament and to bring them from their long confinement to the daylight, on the very spot where they once stood in Imperial or perhaps Republican grandeur. Whenever possible, the owner retains one of the statues from these excavations. The history of excavations made with the purpose of finding antiquities shows in every period how grateful we should be to the Italians for the continuance of that gentle, intelligent custom. It has been followed on a large scale by the famous archæologist de Rossi when classifying pagan and Christian inscriptions in a corridor of the Vatican, and Christian inscriptions along the walls of the first floor in the courtyard of the Palace of St. John in Lateran. Antique fragments are generally used in and around Rome for ordinary building material. We deplore that abuse, and marvel that the mason sometimes took the trouble to turn the carved side of the stone to the exterior.

The tradition of bygone centuries lives yet in its own surroundings in parchment-bound books. They contain the history of a great number of Roman families, often dating from the XVI<sup>th</sup>

century, and fill the notary's office, illumined by the green, shaded light. Corresponding archives of daily life are to be found in different parish churches; three or four centuries' history of the citizens of Rome is kept there, with all the details of the family, its growth and decay, and the passing of its possessions from one hand and generation to another.

The old book store is another example of the continuous past. Its contents are many centuries old. Its works are still consulted by lawyers and theologians, two mighty professions which have ruled law and religion by giving laws to religion and making a religion of law.

Just before the Via Appia turns sharply downwards, opposite a marble plate bearing the coat of arms of the Barberini Pope, Urbanus VIII, a pathway to the left leads to the majestic Porta Furba. Or, going down a certain distance on the Via Appia, the road leads through classic ground and, to the right, a mighty mass of brick marks the direction of the Via Latina.

The whole track of this road from the Porta Latina—now walled up and unused—is marked by other ruins of the same origin. The line of the Via Latina crosses on the map the line of the Via Appia. On the spot insinuatingly called "Cessati Spiriti" (departed spirits) no trace of pavement is left. The Via Latina takes possession of its rights some hundred yards farther. A small section of

the way has been well preserved, with beautiful brick buildings on both sides—the former tombs of the Via Latina. The basement of an ancient Christian church, Santo Stefano, completes this corner of Pagan and Christian Rome.

Behind Santo Stefano, enclosed in a square of walls and surrounded by luxurious vegetation, the Roman Campagna appears framed, at the basis, by the forms of an aqueduct. The eye follows instinctively the regular succession of arches.

Stretching afar, they seemingly sink down into the ground of the Campagna. Close to the city there is a curious twist with an arch and a square white panel above it, at once attracting our gaze in the monotonous parade of arches. There is something enigmatical, something capricious and whimsical about it, like the sudden change in the long-drawn popular songs which may at that moment be sounding across the fields. There is something surprising, something even amusing in that serious, severe practical work of patient architecture, making a gate of one of its hundred arches, a gate which is not the gate of a city wall, but really only a wider arch.

This Porta Furba, whose name has never been clearly explained, may seem at a distance small and unassuming, but gains in importance as one approaches it. It seems conscious of being something substantial on its own merits, and of holding an acceptable position between a real gate, a

master in a city wall, and an arch, which is only one of a long row of servants in an aqueduct.

The whole of this piece of architecture, breaking through the regularity of the serpentine brick aqueduct, is harmonious. Its noble lineaments fit perfectly in the scheme of the entire construction, the marble tablets above both sides of the arch correspond exactly with the opening; and the height of the gate itself, with its protruding summit over the aqueduct-line, does not in the least mar the general symmetry.

Standing before Porta Furba one easily forgets that it is only a part of an aqueduct, as before the Porta Maggiore, which has still larger inscriptions . . . till its real meaning reveals itself, when it appears even better proportioned to the enclosed panorama.

The triangle, accepted as the geometrical formula of æsthetics, here holds in the deep background the beauty of nature. The sacred hills of Latium rise in a symbolical figure, as if the hand of a Divine Artist had drawn their outlines for the rejoicing of the Eternal City. They are a triumph of blue colouring in every gradation, from ultramarine in the ravines, through a process of purification, to the sublime blue of the human eye. The victory of blue is evident when compared to the Wedgwood pale blue and white of the more remote parts of the background, the snow-covered Sabina.





PORTA FURBA.





We cannot remove from our mind the illusion that this heavenly prospect in all its details has been immortally created. It is with an effort that we realise that the white tracery was not placed on its canvas by the point of the Master's brush.

A moment of æsthetic joy awaits us on the road from Porta Furba to the hills, the classical Via Tusculana.

As we measure the distance with the old-fashioned milestone, the distant lines seem to move forward at every point. Valleys seem hollowed out of each side of the central range of mountains, separated from each other by strong buttresses, solidly planted in the Campagna.

The Italian name "poggi," from "poggiare" (to lean against), perfectly describes those buttresses, chosen sites for lovely views and change of air.

After the first difficult ascent of the road to the level platform of the hills, Frascati rises before our eyes, and the confused spots of white and copper-green shape themselves into great villas, standing in a profusion of vineyards and masses of evergreens, with a convincing optimism of yellow and brown tints in the architectural features.

The wanderer feels the appeal of the immense silence of the Campagna: a soundless voice—a motionless warning gesture. Then, after a long pause, his soul thrills again as he threads his way through the largest Campo Santo of human history.

The winding highway is set with gems. Groups of lofty roofed pines, overshadowing a rustic home, stir the imagination by their beauty. Two cypresses seem carved from marble in their stillness—sentries of a miniature shrine, invoking the protection of the Madonna for the vineyards. Those two cypresses and the little shrine in the wall announce Frascati, a corner in a green paradise—the summit of the road from Porta Furba.

Another path passes over the arch of Porta Furba, stretches much farther and reaches a lonely spot in the Campagna. It is the itinerary of the Acqua Felice, marked out on all good maps containing the suburbs of Rome, and with a twisting line crossing the roadway several times, though passing underground, far from Porta Furba.

It is not possible to follow the course of the water upwards, its route passing also over a number of brooks and little rivers. But, with leisure, and the desire to see the origin of a great Roman aqueduct, you may take a beautiful walk from Frascati, along the village of Colonna, down to the Via Labicana. Thence, passing by the sign-post "Osteria Nuova," go in the direction of Rome, till the first house is reached with a small path at the right hand. This path leads to a real Italian farm, and some peasant will guide you. A shepherd, dressed in goatskin trousers and a sheepskin coat, leads you along stone marks, not unlike the tops of obelisks, to a spot considered

of some importance as the "spring." The smallness of this rivulet leads one to suppose that there must be another supply from underground or from side channels.

Here, in the "Agro Colonna," a Pope, accompanied by three Cardinals, appeared unexpectedly in the year 1585. He strolled around and gazed over the Campagna towards Rome—his reign was to mark the horizon with the dome of St. Peter's—and, in his imagination, he connected the spring on the high plateau with his beloved city.

The plan was of true pontifical splendour, worthy of a Cæsar in strategics, of a Pope in works of peace. In his dream he saw the water creeping down the first declines, in the earth, through passages crossing the roads, carried on the arches of its aqueduct to the city he would transform.

A broad inscription on the Porta Furba following in style and character the examples in Imperial reigns, tells of this Pope: Sixtus V, who "gathered the waters from afar, and brought them onward to Rome." This is only one other instance of an arch used as a gate and of a papal inscription far away from the city in the Campagna. A later specimen, we could say imitation, by Paul V, is behind the Janiculus on a very beautiful highway, the Via Aurelia Antica, one which also dwells in the mind by reason of the charm of its scenery.

Ask one of the peasants around Porta Furba who Sixtus V was. He will know. Sixtus V has left the strongest impression in the popular memory. To him is attributed the Ponte Sisto, and surely the Cappella Sistina in the Vatican; both, however, were built by his predecessor Sixtus IV!

Your Roman is flattered by your curiosity, and pleased to show his knowledge of Italian celebrities. He tells about Sixtus V coming into the Conclave after the sudden death of . . .—do not ask whom—of the Pope who preceded him—a worn, bent old man, with one foot in his grave. The Cardinals, taken unawares and much divided among themselves, agreed to elect him in order to have a Pope without delay, intending to subjugate him thoroughly in the short span of life left to him, and forming great plans for the swiftly approaching Conclave. As soon as the election was accomplished, the new Pope suddenly revived, threw off his crutches, stood up in his full strength, and gave his first commands in a thundering voice!

The native Roman has often seen this dramatic moment represented on the stage and enjoyed it immensely. It has all the characteristics of popular pictures, novels and tragedies: striking colouring, mingled with some moral lesson; and what is seldom missing in popular art . . . deceivers deceived!



I return to this chapter of popular history which in the meantime looms clearer before the eyes of my readers.

In every way Sixtus V was an ingenious man—the speaker goes on to say—severe and just, but not tyrannical like Nero. He continues to recount very amusing tales of the Pope, who, disguised as a monk, went to the Coliseum to expose a gang of bandits hidden in those ruins; of his inventing leaden seals to mark measures for wine, punishing every host who did not mete out the full measure. Without any doubt he will conclude his history with the common sigh: “Even now sometimes a Sisto Quinto would be useful!”

As to the arch, he will understand the general sense of the inscription—his own tongue and the Latin of his church helping him—and, if you give him time, make quite an interesting speech about Roman water. Italians are proud of the sparkling, rushing fountains of the Eternal City; they know the purity of the element, brought from afar through the arid Campagna without losing its strength on the long journey. In the silence of some late evening walk, when in many parts of Rome the music of the fountains guides us to the principal squares, we remember what he has told us of the never-ending energy of Roman waters. . . .

The Popes were far-seeing when they placed

such an inscription—aristocratically not omitting the Latin idiom—on such a spot. All things are carefully thought over in Italy. Sixtus V had the opportunity of bringing his name and merits before the eyes of the passers-by on two of the great roads wending their way from Rome, each on the arch of an aqueduct—one near the gate of San Lorenzo and this one on the Porta Furba. A curious concourse of circumstances now brings these inscriptions to the notice of modern tourists, for one gate leads to the steam tramway to Tivoli and the electric tramway to Frascati passes by the other. The Pope did not dream of these possibilities, but had prepared his monumental note for all times and all eventualities. . . .

For three centuries people have come and gone from Frascati through the arch of Porta Furba and learned to know Sixtus V, while legend was weaving the web of antiquity around the figure of the first Pope of the Roman Aqueduct.

In the four inscriptions inside and outside the two arches—near the gate of San Lorenzo and on the Porta Furba—Sixtus V has set out a programme of social economy, and has left the history of his stupendous hydraulic enterprise. The first year of his pontificate, “ann. 1585” in Roman cipher, is the chronological indication. The work was to endure until the end of his pontificate and three hundred years or more, like the uninter-



rupted stream of water carried to Rome. We must admire, in the first place, the compact form in which the plan is expressed at the very beginning of the pontificate, and will have occasion to marvel more at the strong and unceasing efforts which forwarded it to its termination. When the pontiff had commanded—as the outside of Porta Furba tells us—that water should be supplied everywhere, with the intention of enabling the deserted hills to be again inhabited, the outcome of that command was one of the greatest triumphs Papal Rome has ever known since the Cæsars . . . the reconquest of the Hills. The wanderer coming towards the city is able to comprehend the plan from its birth to its culmination. After having passed through the Porta Furba, he searches for the other inscription, as for the reverse of a medal, and realises that the springs were finally discovered, imprisoned, and conducted under the ground, and that they now flow through this arch. . . . On the arch at Porta San Lorenzo—inside the wall of the city, nearer the intensity of town life—the Pope speaks of the two roads leading to Santa Maria Maggiore and Santa Maria degli Angeli, one part only of his important project. Then he also gives more details: “the water passed thirteen miles under the ground and seven miles over the arches.” The newcomer to Rome, knowing the distance of miles he has measured on the way from Tivoli, sees in his

imagination the aqueduct in its full length as long as his journey, and enters the Eternal City with an alert interest.

As we pursue our investigations, we find intention expressed even in the sentence of a papal bull of which, on the other hand, the inscription presents the compound form. It states, for instance, that once his decision taken "the Pope refused to be thwarted either by the expense or by the apparently insurmountable obstacles of the work; determined as he was to establish a second Rome, fructified with an abundance of wholesome water." The inscribed story is on the fountain by the church of Santa Susanna, on the Piazza delle Terme: he began the aqueduct in the first year of his pontificate, and completed it in the third year, 1588.

Through the Middle Ages, the only aqueducts kept constantly in use were the Virgo and the Trajano, as their conduits passed for the greater part under the ground. The "Acqua Vergine" came into the possession of the representatives of the Roman population. The most notable fountain was the "Fontana di Trevi," not yet in its present magnificent state, but merely a spring with a washing-place near it, of which we are still reminded by the neighbouring Via del Lavatore.

The aqueduct has given another name to a well-known street of Rome: the Via dei Condotti (Street of the Conduits). The conduit comes from

the Pincio, and flows under Piazza di Spagna, where it feeds the curious Fountain of the Little Boat—built by the father of the renowned Bernini—and, winding towards the Fontana di Trevi, shows us a fine remembrance of the classical aqueduct in the Via del Nazzareno (behind Sant' Andrea delle Frate, near the Via del Tritone).

The name Trevi is derived from the mediæval name of that quarter : Regione Trevi, from Trivium, the coincidence of three roads near the actual place of the fountain.

The Roman city government instituted special commissions for the maintenance of the fountains. I find one of these mentioned in a curious classical group, in the *Avvisi* of Rome, a kind of written newspaper, of the time of Sixtus V, preserved amongst the manuscripts of the Vatican Library. It speaks of a day in March of the year 1587. The Pope, ever economical, withdrew the pension paid out by his treasury to the city of Rome, for “those who were entrusted with the custody of the Colonna Trajano ; the walls of Rome, the Fontana di Trevi, and the reading of Titus Livius.”

Three of the Popes, celebrated as builders of Rome, interested themselves in the Acqua Vergine : Nicolas V, Sixtus IV, and Leo X, to which Pius V added his collaboration in restoring the aqueduct. Under Gregorius XIII a number of fountains were opened, supplied by this water.

The fountains had not at first their present

attractive form, as in Piazza Colonna, Piazza del Popolo, and at the Pantheon. But the Popes often left the final embellishment of their public works to their successors. Sixtus V, for instance, took up the task left by his predecessor, Gregorius XIII, and added here an obelisk, there a rich basin of fine material and workmanship. One of his successors brought the fountain of Acqua di Trevi, or Vergine, to its existing eloquent shape.

The fountain in Piazza Navona had to wait for Bernini to make it part of the most wonderful scenery of any square in the world. After the death of the illustrious master the main spring, the Fontana di Trevi, was executed from memory after his artistic design. It is a unique example of an artificial waterfall in the centre of a city.

The aqueduct of Alexander Severus was also taken up by Gregorius XIII, but he was forced to leave its completion to his successor, whose name, Felice,<sup>1</sup> it was to bear.

On the "Fontana del Moise" a huge figure of Moses striking the water from the rock symbolises Sixtus V in the attitude most pleasing to his fancy.

The figures by his side and the bas-reliefs of the monument explain to the onlooker that Sixtus was a legislative sovereign, who, amongst other benefits, bestowed on the thirsting Romans a

<sup>1</sup> The name of Sixtus V was Felice Peretti before he became Pope.







FOUNTAIN OF THE ACQUA FELICE.

*Photo. Mascioni*



never-dying source of water called forward as by a miracle.

If we want proofs of this constant preoccupation, we find them in the papal bulls of the time of Sixtus.

The pontiff shows himself a very Mæcenas to a not unimportant circle of artists. The sculptor of his Moses produced in this statue one of the most unsuccessful works of art in Rome. Criticism rained upon his head, like the water born under the stroke of his disproportionate Moses.

Baglione, a painter and art-historian, who has left us the lives of the painters and sculptors from 1572 till 1642, relates that this sculptor, Prospero Bresciano, a man of much promise, had been very successful with the tomb of Gregorius XIII in Saint Peter's. The four lions under the obelisk in the square before the Vatican are familiar to all travellers. They should carry the monolith . . . but they seem rather as if entrapped under its weight! Nevertheless, they represent very well the particular type of a grim lion, with square features, taken from the coat of arms of the Pope, and a typical decorative design under his reign. Those four victims of the obelisk are the works of Prospero Bresciano.

He carved his Moses, so Baglione writes, against the advice of his friends, from a block lying on the floor. The figure when raised no longer corresponded with the general expecta-

tion—not even with the laws of perspective. The artist defended his work against pitiless censors, but in vain, and died of melancholia in the house of the famous archæologist, Fulvio Orsini.

A similar scandal occurred at Florence in the same century at the inauguration of a certain statue. On the morning following its erection the block, carved by Bandinelli, was found covered with printed pamphlets that are still preserved in a Florentine library.

The armorial bearings above the monument of Moses are by Flaminio Vacca, whose name will also become familiar to us as a writer of a memoir on archæological discoveries; also the bas-relief on the right, representing Gideon and the Soldier. The other bas-relief, Moses striking the water from the Rock, is the work of G. B. della Porta. A document states that the experts valued it at 1350 scudi (a scudo is now four shillings, but was worth much more at that time). Sixtus V reduced it to 1000 scudi, and with this sum the sculptor had to be content.

We find in Rome another charmingly conceived fountain built under the reign of Sixtus V: its beauty seems to corroborate the tradition that the original plan was drawn by Raphael.

Four tall bronze figures of young men are seen holding basins on which, from their hands, four turtles climb with much precaution. The Romans love this “Fontana delle Tartarughe,” as was

proved by the universal consternation when lately one of the turtles was stolen ; and the public feeling was demonstrated even more by the general rejoicings when the turtle was returned to its former place, having been found after the thief had thrown it away.

In popular Roman stories the “fountain of the turtles” holds a unique place. It has been thought strange that one of the windows of the Palazzo Mattei, facing the square of this fountain, should have been walled in, and it is naturally attempted to connect the closed window with a story that will include also the fountain.

A member of the Mattei family—thus runs the legend—living too lavishly, had incurred the displeasure of his future father-in-law to such a point that the father withdrew his permission to the marriage. Then young Mattei, to show his cleverness and the power of his finances, swiftly (in one night !) erected the Fountain of the Turtles in front of the palace. The next day the sight conquered the irate father and won back his approval ; the window from which the father’s wondering eyes first saw the fountain was walled in as a perpetual remembrance. Another more malignant version says that Mattei first married the daughter, and then, out of spite, spent her entire fortune on the Fontana delle Tartarughe !

The man who, after fruitless efforts, brought the Acqua Felice to Rome, and who was the foremost

artist in direct contact with Sixtus V, was the architect Fontana. The portraits of the two have been preserved in a painting in the Vatican Library, where Fontana is seen showing his master the plans for the splendid hall in which the painting is located: the show room of the library.

Domenico Fontana had shared the days of disgrace of Cardinal Felice Peretti, and, when but a poor mason-boy, had built a modest home for the Cardinal. Often he was entrusted with the care of the money economised by this prince of the Church.

Later in life their names were to be coupled in great constructions, such as the Acqua Felice, etc. Is it not a specimen of the humour of fate that the architect of the Pope who gave the Romans water should be called Fontana . . . ?

The walk to Porta Furba will inspire us with a greater eagerness for discovery. Again the "Anno pontificatus I," that "first year of the pontificate," remains in our mind. The example is so fine; the start so grandiose! an ardent desire arises in us to know more of this man, his pontificate, and the works he conceived afterwards. It is like an article by a good writer seen by chance in a review. After one proof of talent we feel confidence, interest, a ready friendship, a greater curiosity. We want his portrait, and will study it in detail, noting his features, the shape of his



hand, his whole attitude with the anticipated benevolence upon which real artists can rely.

The Porta Furba calls our attention to an author who wrote his name in stone. The first impression counts the most; but, supposing we saw his other works first and then the Porta Furba, the impression would still be produced, as, for instance, the personality of a great historian gains in our eyes when we discover a little volume of poetry written in his earliest years.

If we arrive, for instance, by the old road, over Siena and Viterbo to Rome, and alight at a little station, with the glory of the dome of St. Peter's before our eyes, as a general introduction such an arrival is in every sense monumental. There, the glory of Michelangelo, who planned, overshadows that of Sixtus V, who achieved. Porta Furba portrays the Pope in his most attractive aspect.

Returning to the city, we pass through the streets which he planned, the hills which he rendered habitable, along buildings marked with the very strong characteristics of the later years of his pontificate.

Leave all this for a sentimental journey through the Rome of Sixtus V. The buildings along the hilly streets change in the brief twilight from pale rose to grey and black—and transform the music from major to minor, from allegro maestoso to andante lamentoso.

## II

### THE SIXTINE CHAPEL IN SANTA MARIA MAGGIORE

AT every step Italy offers the opportunity of learning that which the whole world likes to know. It is like an open book held before our eyes. Even without any great effort, the sense of the outspread pages penetrates the mind. Archæology, History, and Art lie everywhere on the traveller's way, without the necessity of going to a museum. So much so that many even who are quite indifferent to learning cannot overcome a growing interest in all around them.

Those who remain in this country, even for less than a month, will find themselves unconsciously acquainted with quite a vocabulary of technical terms of archæology and art. "Fresco," "tempera," "bas-relief," the different names for the garments of Roman and Greek statues, the manifold ways of building in brick and stone, the stone-material itself, the various orders of columns and arches, will become clear expressions to the most ordinary person. He has heard of, read about, and seen them hundreds of times, and they have entered unobtrusively into his daily language.



People often undergo a transformation in Italy; for a short period, the atmosphere goes to their heads. They use the new language with the joy of children who begin to master the power of speech, filling every conversation with views on art, born in their unpractised fancy—as, in the nursery, the Olympic races are evolved out of one horizontal and one perpendicular chair. Those who have studied for as many years as others have walked days, find it difficult to express their admiration for the Moses of Michelangelo.

Returning to Sixtus V, you will have observed on the Porta Furba, carved in one of the corners, three little mountains of uniform shape. They occur, with or without a star, on many monuments of Rome, but it does not every time follow that the monument dates from the pontificate of Sixtus V.

Mountains are in the coat of arms of several Popes, and mislead the unwary visitor to Rome, who was proud to have learned by heart the armorial bearings of at least one Pope. This danger also occurs with the different Popes of the Medici family, in whose coats of arms are always six balls.

I speak here of the most convincing examples only, for the complicated insignia of some Popes further confuse this question when one detail is used for decorative purposes.

The complete coat of arms of Sixtus V can

never be mistaken. You find it on the Fountain of Moses. The lion, with the pears in his paw, standing upright; and, crossing him, a bar with the three mountains and the star. The Pope's name was Felice Peretti; he was born in Montalto. The three mountains represent his birthplace, Montalto (literally high mountain); and, as "Peretti" means "little pears," those fruits are placed in the mighty clasp of the lion.

The analysis of the coat of arms—perhaps also on the "Quattro Fontane"—is only partly responsible for the decoration with lions' heads in monuments of Sixtus V. The royal animal's head was a favourite design long before the time of the stern Pope, who was proud of his own symbol.

I have explained the "Montalto." The pears alone, recalling the name of the Cardinal before his pontificate, might be of little interest to the public. Even the name Felice applied to the water had to be explained on the fountain as being Sixtus' name before he was made Pope. They do not figure alone in the coat of arms like the "little pots" (pignatelli) and the "oak" (rovere) in the arms of Innocentius XII and of Sixtus IV and Julius II. The Pignatelli and Rovere may be more familiar to some than the Peretti of Sixtus V's arms.

A beautiful example of the analysis of his armorial bearings is given in the decorative frieze at the palace of St. John in Lateran, above two of the

façades—the lion and the pear alternating in an elegant and by no means tedious succession.

Even more artistic is another design for the same architectural purpose on a house opposite the well-known Baths of Titus or the Golden House of Nero, nearly facing the entrance. The foundation of this house probably dates from Sixtus V, as is mentioned on a marble tablet in the wall ; it was a kind of suburban retreat connected with a city hospital.

Where the “Montalto” leaves a doubt, not being accompanied by a date of the reign (1585–1590), it is better to look for the complete coat of arms.

From the Porta Furba, the gateway at San Lorenzo and the Fountain of Moses, it may be surmised that Sixtus was not parsimonious with inscriptions. Already in his own time this characteristic had been observed. Some calligrapher and engraver collected in a handsome oblong album, now a rarity for bibliophiles, the inscriptions made under this Pope. He offered them to the public as patterns of elegance in the language—always Latin—and in the shape and arrangement of the letters, taken from the best classical models. The book is a proof of what we might have guessed, that is, that the perfect form and lettering of the inscriptions of Sixtus V are not due to mere chance, but the result of careful selection and premeditation.

There is in Italy always a deeper meaning to all things than at first would seem to the casual onlooker. Here it is nothing less than the whole spirit of the Renaissance. . . .

On the outside of one of the chapels of the basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore the arms of Felice Peretti reappear in a very modest ornamental application, so simple that they escape the eye lost in admiration of the graceful incline of steps, smoothly leading to the tribuna of one of the seven churches, and the happy combination of straight lines, broad surfaces and gentle curves, which give to this part of the church a wonderful charm.

No doubt can be left as to the founder of this chapel, as soon as we seek inside the church on the right aisle. The Pope's name is visible over the barred windows, between the chapel and the side nave, and there are many examples of his full coat of arms in the decorations.

It is the "Cappella Sistina," chapel of Sixtus V, the model of the "Cappella Paolina" (of Paul V) at the opposite side of the nave.

The two Popes had the good judgment not to remove any of the venerable antiquities of the old church, but to build their own chapels as an addition to the ancient body of the basilica. They satisfied their own spirit of devotion to one of the principal and oldest churches of Rome without imposing the authority of their own times on those parts which could not protest.



When we consider the remains of the original basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore as an architectural relic, we may say that it is enclosed within a precious shrine, the present exterior of the church. It would be unfair on our part to criticise Sixtus V, who started the work of enclosure, and those who continued his work: the second façade beyond the loggia, and the old campanile are the sole external remains of the former walled-in church.

Neither should we censure the ancient custom of whitewashing frescoes, often a necessity in order to disinfect a church used as a hospital in times of an epidemic. But many condemn this old-time practice, not realising that the chalk when scraped off has often revealed beautiful and precious frescoes. They attribute every slight damage to this plastering, not reflecting that the whole painting might have been lost by slowly wearing away or blackened by the smoke of candles.

Though we like to have a perfect image of the mediæval and Early Christian Rome before our eyes, we must not be too exacting. The culture of antiquities, as far as they were Christian, has in one instance—St. Peter's—led to much that is regrettable.

There can be no question there that, with all the Bramantes and Michelangelos, we have lost much that we might have retained. Only this must not prejudice us against all work of restoration, even if done thoroughly and including a

transformation of the exterior. We might be—and that is what I mean—exceedingly glad, if we had the old St. Peter's within its case of new walls, as we have still within the new Santa Maria Maggiore, the splendid nave and tribuna of the old Sancta Maria ad Nives.

Sixtus V had many reasons for his preference for Santa Maria Maggiore. Already as a Cardinal he had begun to build in the neighbourhood his Villa Montalto, now vanished under the modern quarter of the city. Santa Maria Maggiore was one of the great churches on the hills which he wished to render habitable and situated exactly in the centre of the new streets which he intended to open, the principal one being the Via Felice (now called Via Sistina).

It is to his credit that his object in founding a chapel, besides giving a beautiful position to one of the relics preserved in Santa Maria Maggiore, was the erection of a tomb for Pius V, who had deeply loved him, and to whom he had been especially attached.

The original plan certainly also contained the tomb of Sixtus V himself, completed after his death by his nephew, Alessandro Peretti, whom he had made a Cardinal at the age of thirteen, and who in the future was to take a conspicuous part in the building of Sant' Andrea della Valle.

The construction, in which the architecture of the tombs of the two Popes is nearly lost, clearly



shows the original intention. They are not only identical in outline, but also in their portrayal of the principal facts of the two pontifical lives in inscriptions and bas-reliefs.

We have an excellent book, with a short history of the lives of the Popes, compiled from their tombs—one of Gregorovius' more popular writings.

It was reserved for the century of which Cardinal Alessandro Montalto was to see a quarter to produce after his demise a falsification of history such as has hardly ever been adduced against any Pope on such a vast scale. We should not have to deal in this book with those imaginations, inventions, and calumnies of one Gregorius Leti and his imitators if their books had not spread a world-wide influence of would-be historical notions about Sixtus.

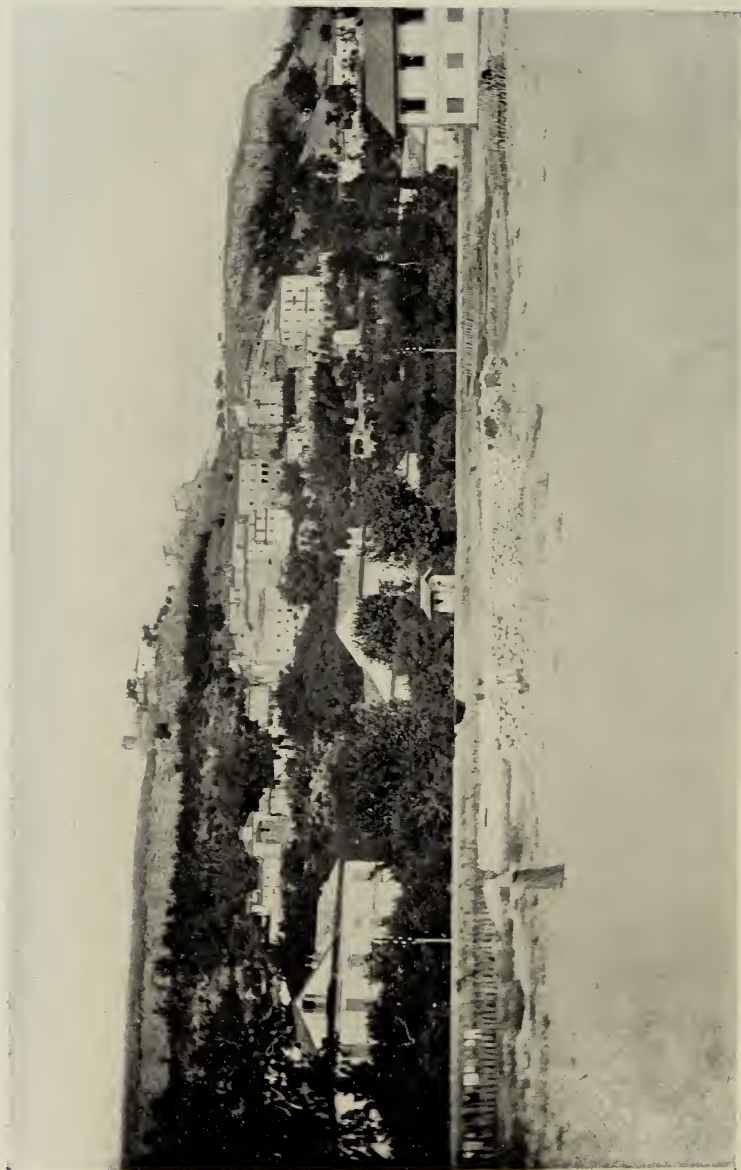
The story is well known of a Cardinal who, with assumed senility and sickness, deceived his colleagues for years, until the very day of his election. The Romans of Porta Furba and elsewhere tell this story, which we all had heard long before. It has occurred to us that his name was Sixtus V, and it is proved by the great historian Ranke, whose *Die Römischen Päpste* should, if possible, be read in the original; he proves conclusively that the malignant fancy of Leti has been able to blind the whole world on this subject. A certain Tempesti had been charged to cleanse the historical figure of

the Pope from all the ink spots which Leti had thrown upon it. But he rubbed the bronze too hard, and the effect was a highly-polished statuette which nobody would accept as the true image of the most energetic reformer amongst the Popes, whose reign only lasted from 1585–1590.

Critical history has completed Ranke's portrait of Sixtus. One of the former Ambassadors of Austria to the Vatican—Hübner—published his book, *Sixte Quint*, based upon the contemporary reports of the Venetian, Florentine, Spanish, and French Ambassadors. Illumined by those powerful searchlights, Sixtus appears quite otherwise than by the flare of Leti's tallow-candle.

The life history of this Pope is engraved on a black stone, in golden letters, under the kneeling statue. The form is compact, yet the inscription is long. There was so much to relate about him, that even an imitation of the Roman shorthand in epigraphy did not reduce its size. Perhaps if the composer had not been Alessandro Peretti, but Pietro Bembo, he would have found a magical formula such as he dictated over the grave of Raphael in the Pantheon. But Bembo would not have been at his ease with this Pope, and who knows if the epitaph would not have had some grain of the bitterness distilled in the epitaph of Aretino, composed while he was alive—one of the most piercing satires the Renaissance has produced?





GROTTAMMARE.

The beginning of the inscription tells us that Sixtus was born at Cupra, in Piceno, and educated at Montalto. These simple facts, testified by this memorial, have been the subject of endless controversies. As soon as a Pope is elected, his birthplace becomes the centre of public interest. The same thing happens when Presidents of republics are elected, only with Popes the interest is even more international. Often some small country place or some eagle's nest lost in the mountains suddenly becomes famous. Who had heard of Carpineto before Cardinal Pecci was elected under the name of Leo XIII?

Seven cities fought for the honour of being the birthplace of Homer. This was possible, as Homer did not take time or trouble to shed any light on the subject. On the contrary, Sixtus V has declared several times in ordinary conversation and in public utterance that he was born in Grot-tammare, which place corresponds to the former Cupra. He often bestowed gifts and favours on his humble birthplace. Neither did he forget that his family originally came from Dalmatia. As a Cardinal, he was protector of the Roman church of San Girolamo for the nations on the other side of the Adriatic. It was then but a little old church, but, under his pontificate, it was transformed into the handsome structure—architecture by Martino Lunghi—which we admire from the



Ponte Cavour. The Montalto design is to be found there in abundant evidence.

It seems that the Peretti family had fled from their territory because of Turkish persecutions. Sixtus V ever was an implacable enemy of the Turks, and probably had some reason for this hatred.

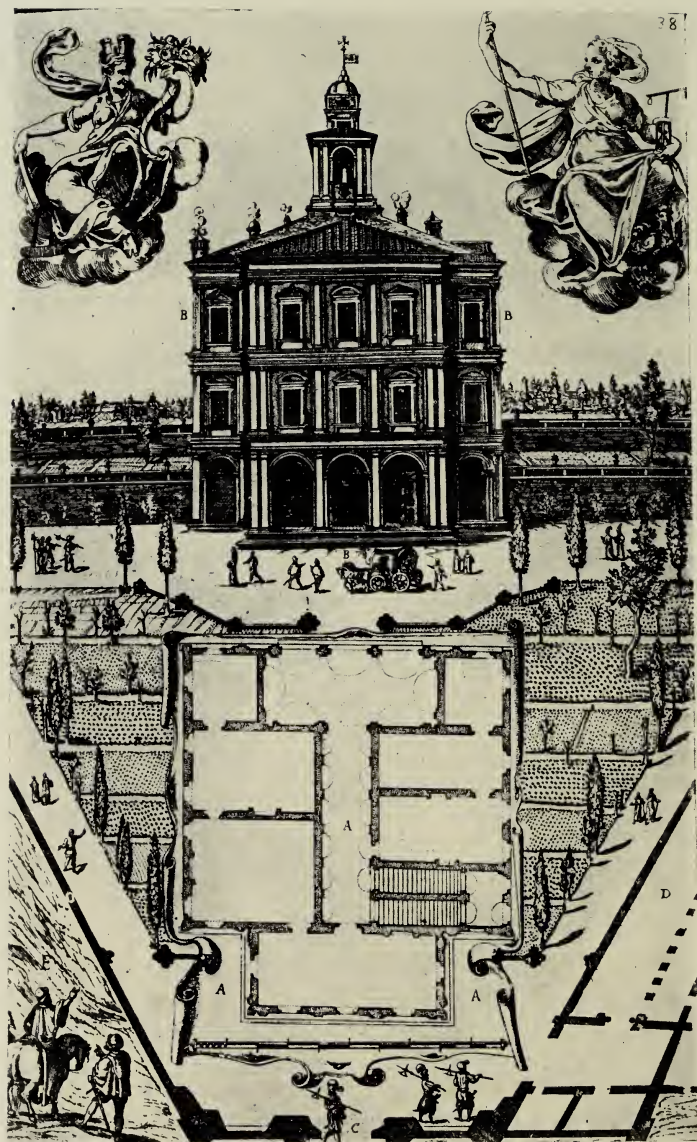
The birth of Sixtus V—December 13th, 1521—in Grottammare was the consequence of another flight of the Peretti family caused by the invasion of the army of Francesco I, Duke of Urbino. The story goes that, even under such unhappy circumstances, the father of the future Pope had a presentiment which caused him to give his son the good-omened name of “Felice” (happy), and afterwards educated him as well as he could in order to reach the goal of his ambitions. In the meantime, the boy may have had to look after domestic animals. The simple life of those parts of Italy makes it very possible that the lowest of those had the attention of the young Peretti.

The fact was afterwards used as a strong antithesis: the Pope, who was a swineherd in his youth! But, as often happens with such an antithesis, prepared to strike the fancy of the public, it loses its power when we look at it more closely.

Early in life he entered a monastery, and became a novice at the age of twelve. His best biographer follows the great inscription of the chapel in Santa Maria Maggiore very closely when







THE VILLA OF CARDINAL MONTALTO.

speaking of the remarkable oratorical powers of the young Fra Peretti—"concionator insignis."

In the library of the Chigi family in Rome, a book is preserved with daily notes by the monk; the true diary of an ecclesiastical man who has to be more careful with his money than with his talents. He had suffered from penury from the very start. It has been observed that economy was the virtue he admired most; he praised it on every occasion, even in the solemn form of papal bulls. As for extravagance, he fumed against those who wasted money, his own life being an example of frugality. Before assuming the purple robes, he was forced to accept the "poor Cardinal's pension." His friend and protector, Pius V, willingly accorded him this pension, but one day Gregorius XIII happened to notice the erection of Cardinal Peretti's "Villa Montalto" as he was coming out of Santa Maria Maggiore, and took the pension from him, saying that Cardinals who could build such country houses had no need of charity.

Among records of small pecuniary gifts to members of his family and to members of monastic orders, titles of the books composing the humble private library of the monk who was to build the Vatican Library in its present magnificent form, together with careful notes of sheep he had bought and sent to his brother's pastures, we find the names of the places where the youthful Peretti went to preach.

It is a whole itinerary, between the years 1539 and 1555, stretching from North Italy to Naples. Another precious book contains some examples of his ecclesiastical eloquence. The sermons were printed in Naples in 1554. The only copy extant lies among the treasures of the Barberini collection, now a part of the Vatican Library.

The date and the very fact of the printing are easily explained. Fra Peretti, not long before, had caused a scandal by daring to preach against Charles V.

It was only an instance of the democratic feelings which he was to show more clearly during his papal reign.

His reputation as a speaker was soon established, but it was not easy for his protectors to defend his situation as a poor monk criticising the mightiest ruler of Europe. And yet they brought him through those attacks, and were delighted when his eloquence attracted the whole of Rome to his sermons in the church of Santi Apostoli. Ignatius of Loyola, Filippo Neri, and two future Popes, one of whom was to be canonised—Cardinal Ghisleri, afterwards Pius V—complimented him in glowing terms after his sermons. It is not to be wondered at that the brilliant new preacher found a publisher at once. The rarity of the book may also be considered as a proof that it was much read.







CASALE DI PIO QUINTO.



The inscription on the tomb at Santa Maria Maggiore goes on to describe his position in the Inquisition and in the order of St. Francis. It gives, of course, a mere outline of the momentous epoch in the life of Fra Peretti ; his struggles to impose his strict ideas upon all the convents of his order, to which he was sent on a mission of reform. He met with some resistance, particularly in Venice, in the great monastery of Frari.

When he had gained his cause (for which purpose he had to retire to Rome) he showed great magnanimity towards his principal adversaries and a brilliant future was predicted for such exceptional nobility of character. This was the first time when he astonished the Court of Rome by one of his characteristics: "a facility to forgive great offences more easily than small ones."

Before reaching the summit he had to ascend a difficult road. One incident is mentioned in the inscription, in the most innocent way. Felice Peretti was sent to Spain by Pius V, with Cardinal Ugo Boncompagni, the Apostolic Delegate. This is an historical fact, worthily mentioned in the peaceful epitaph. It even has some rhetorical worth. Italians never neglect that part of an inscription on a monument which is "lodatoria" (praise). Eulogy assumed a substantial part in any inscription which went beyond a mere statement of biographical dates.

It was an honour for Fra Peretti to be sent on

this expedition, and the mention of it on his tombstone took the character of a eulogy. Most probably the monk distinguished by Pius V gave little thought to this posthumous honour, when struggling against the antipathy showed to him by Cardinal Boncompagni and enduring the humiliations which he had to suffer.

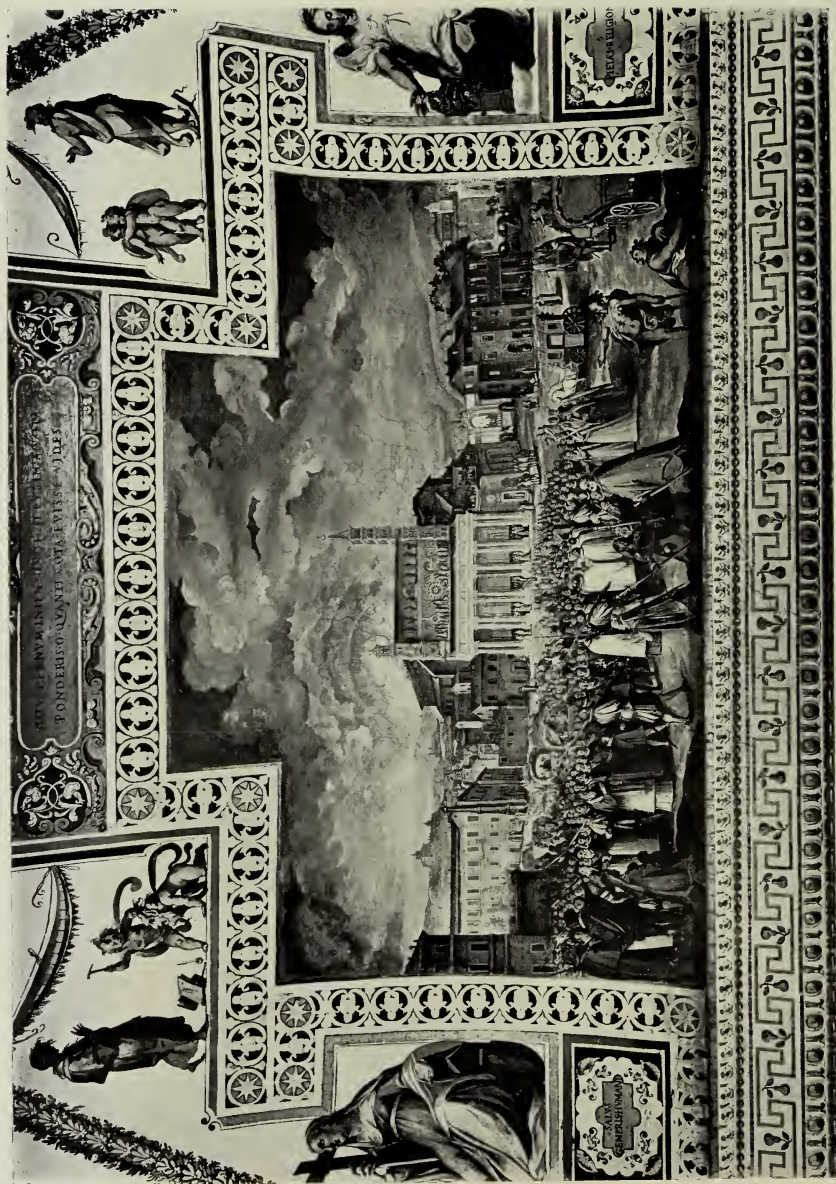
Cardinal Boncompagni never overcame this feeling, and continued his negligent treatment of Fra Felice when, later on, he succeeded to the Papal throne as Gregorius XIII.

On his side, Felice Peretti, when he had become Sixtus V, never forgot the antagonism of Cardinal Boncompagni, and more particularly the hostile acts of Gregorius XIII. He often criticised the deeds of his predecessor, and pointed out how differently he himself performed his own duties.

Sincere admiration on both sides existed between Pius V and Peretti, whom he had made a Cardinal.

The Sixtine Chapel in Santa Maria Maggiore is a monument of his gratitude. The tomb of Pius V and his own sepulchre are united under the dome, which another Pius (Pius IX) restored to its present state. Pius V also was of modest extraction, and had been a monk in the order of St. Dominic—he is represented as such in the bas-relief of gilded bronze on his tomb. He afterwards took a central position in great political





SIXTUS V VISITING SANTA MARIA MAGGIORE.

(*Vatican fresco.*)



and historical events pictured in marble bas-reliefs, which assume the aspect of paintings by their picturesque effects of light and shade.

Under the reign of Sixtus V a biography of Pius V was written, and in January, 1588, his remains were brought to the vault in Santa Maria Maggiore.

Sixtus V often visited the site of his future resting-place in its work of construction. He frequently paid similar visits to other buildings of his in course of being erected, to the discomfiture of the overseers. The *Avvisi*, the primitive newspaper of those days, tell us how he once unexpectedly appeared at the palazzo of St. John in Lateran, and sternly rebuked the workmen for their indolence. He walked around over half-finished walls and vaults with juvenile agility, notwithstanding the bad weather.

One day in July, 1587, he arrived, with twelve Cardinals, at Santa Maria Maggiore, and, after hearing mass, entered the Cappella del Presepe, or Sistine Chapel. His old friend Fontana was present, and not greatly surprised when Sixtus told him to hasten with the work, saying that he might begin new undertakings at once, but specially urging him to push on the work of his tomb.

A protest arose from the Cardinals, who predicted that the Pope would accomplish much more before being carried to Santa Maria Maggiore.



It would seem that the kneeling statue, represented in adoration of the relic after which the chapel is named, was put in its place during the Pope's lifetime.

To a man of strong fibre like Peretti, it probably caused no emotion to see his own tomb completed by a life-size statue of himself placed in its centre.

It would seem from his unremitting haste as if Sixtus felt that his reign would be a brief one; that, after his coronation as Pope, his days were numbered. A mighty rush pervades the whole pontificate, as will be noticed when his achievements are catalogued and mentioned more in detail.

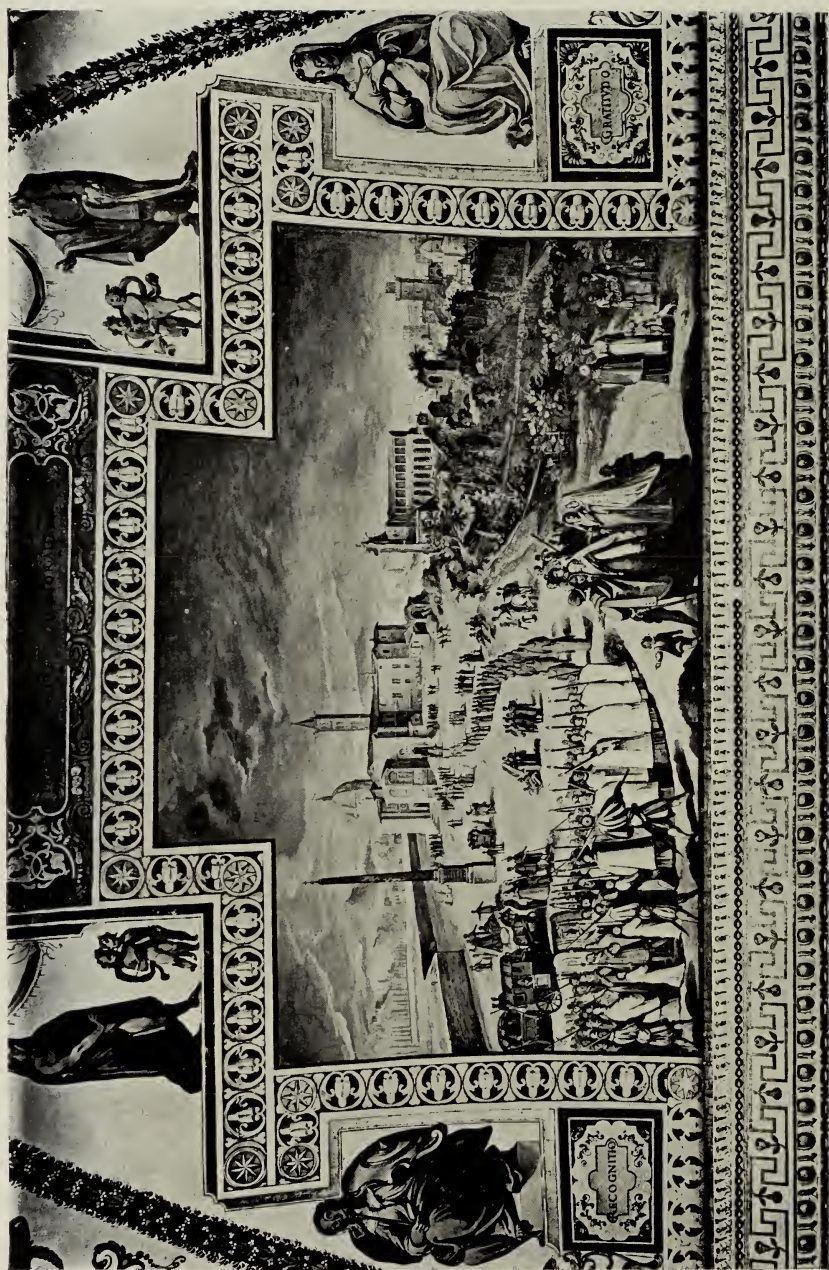
Fontana himself was astonished at the restless activity of his mighty patron. When describing his works as architect to Sixtus V, he apologises for his laconism, saying that everything had to be done rapidly, as other orders were already awaiting him.

Baglione the biographer describes Sixtus as "one who loved hurry."

His other characteristics are brought forward: a hasty temper, a passion for talking, and a very close handling of all money matters, combined with some traits betraying the former monk until the end of his life.

Ambassadors often speak of scenes of fury in the very rooms of the Pope, and, on other occasions, express their surprise that His Holiness talked so





THE BURIAL PROCESSION OF PIUS V ENTERING SANTA MARIA MAGGIORE.  
(Vatican fresco.)

much. He had a craving for speech—"talking fever," as his best biographer calls it.

Something of the preacher was left! But the Pope seldom preached, and then only before a small circle, who always marvelled at his deep eloquence. In his new position, this mania for talking was perhaps not always advantageous.

His talent for economy is even alluded to in anecdotes. Public opinion often busied itself with the subject, but with all due circumspection.

The severity which characterised the reign of Sixtus V from first to last, made everybody careful in his speech. The so-called "menanti," writers of little papers to be sent to other courts of Italy, had to be extremely prudent if they did not wish to finish their career at the stake on the bridge before Castle St. Angelo.

Pasquino alone went on as boldly as ever. Unseen hands attached pamphlets to the mutilated statue, its basis, and the wall behind it. He declared that the laundresses of Rome would soon have to pay taxes for the rays of the sun, so useful to their profession. . . .

The temperament of Sixtus made him sometimes smile and sometimes rage at Pasquino. But he was as unable to suppress this daring fellow as was any other Pope. The will of one man, be he a Sovereign, had to submit to the strong nature of the Roman population, and its habit of free speech, under all kinds of different rulers. Still in our



days the real Roman has an especial talent for grasping a situation, and expressing it in a satirical form, or even in a short rhyme.

The history of Rome after 1500 might be written from the satirical works of Pasquino. A real poet, a classical writer, who looked down on the untrammelled wit of Pasquino, took up the cudgels on his behalf with an undeniable feeling of comradeship. When one of Sixtus V's successors wanted to throw the satirist's statue into the Tiber, Torquato Tasso warned him that, from the banks, would rise legions of frogs to disturb the peace of the city with their incessant noise. Marforio, the companion and adversary of Pasquino, another "stone mouth," declared with satisfaction that Satire had been saved by Poetry!

From the point where Sixtus' election is portrayed, the reliefs of the monument in S. M. Maggiore and the inscription continue together. It might even seem as if they competed to describe in the most compact form the laborious reign of this Pope.

In the three small upper spaces are: the canonisation of a Spanish Franciscan which took place on the 2nd of July, 1588, in the old part of the basilica of Saint Peter, afterwards destroyed by Paulus V; the crowning of the Pope on the steps of Saint Peter's by Cardinal de' Medici; and the







TOMB OF PIUS V.

*Photo. Mosconi.*

pacification between Austria and King Sigismund of Poland by the intervention of Cardinal Hippolytus Aldobrandini—later Clemens VIII.

The difference with the tomb of Pius V opposite is already quite noticeable in the summit of the monument. They both have the coronation in the centre ; but while Pius V's reign is also represented by two battle scenes—the sea battle of Lepanto and a land battle in France—Sixtus has much more peaceful subjects. The other panels on the tomb of Pius V are symmetrical ; the Pope giving a standard to Marcantonio Colonna, the hero of Lepanto, and a marshal's baton to the Count of Santa Fiore, sent into France against Condé.

The whole tomb of Pius V speaks of war in strange contradiction to the spiritual features of the pontiff, represented in the act of blessing with the rays of his sanctity behind him.

Sixtus V, in his heart, must have admired this warlike monument. Danger from the Turks was on his mind even after the battle of Lepanto, and the home politics of France interested him specially, next to the fate of Mary Stuart and the deeds of Elizabeth . . . whom he both hated and admired.

These feelings were reciprocated by Elizabeth. She declared that the Pope was the only man worthy of her hand. . . .

Instead of Lepanto, Sixtus saw his money sunk in the fleet which had been called beforehand the

Invincible Armada. His activity on the sea was limited. Yet it is said that he built a galley in the very centre of Rome, before the church of San Gerolamo, and always had some ships out to protect the shores.

His own monument, instead of war, shows works of peace and of public utility. The upper right-hand panel represents Cardinal Aldobrandini as a peacemaker between Poland and Austria. This pacification, which took place far away, is here represented as on the square of St. John in Lateran . . . with a full view of the new palace and the obelisk. The scene becomes more vivid by the presence of a cavalcade of Cardinals.

Not without reason was this square chosen. Cardinal Aldobrandini, on his return to Rome after his mission, was received with enthusiasm by Sixtus V. After this visit *ad limina*, he spent the night in the monastery of San Pietro in Vincoli. The next morning the Cardinals came on horseback to bring him to the Consistory in St. John in Lateran . . . thus solemnising at the same time his entry into the city after his mission.

Now we may venture to suppose that this part of the monument—with all respect to Sixtus V, his peace in Poland and his Lateran palace—was made afterwards, when Cardinal Aldobrandini was Pope Clemens VIII. This panel would then be an agreeable souvenir, offered in quite proper form.

A cavalcade of Cardinals was by no means a

rare event. Pius IV (1559–1565) had ordered the Cardinals to come to the Vatican, not in carriages, but mounted, giving as a reason that the German Emperor Charles V had much admired those cavalcades.

The predecessor of Sixtus V, Gregorius XIII, was a great horseman. It is related by a very trustworthy witness that, at the age of eighty-one, he could mount his horse without the aid of a groom. Riding through Rome and its surroundings was one of his greatest pleasures. Sixtus V was a strong pedestrian, and easily exhausted the Cardinals, who were quite unable to keep up with him when he—the expression was really used then —“took his exercise.”

The centre panel is the work of Giovanni Antonio Valsoldo, who also made the kneeling statue. The slabs at either side are by Egidio della Riviera,<sup>1</sup> a sculptor of Flemish birth, but who became a real Roman, like his contemporary Niccolo d'Arras, and, in the following century, Francesco Duquesnoy.

Under these panels, on both sides of the statue, we find two of a larger size representing the works of Sixtus V. The one on his right hand is also by Valsoldo ; the other by Niccolo d'Arras.

The latter panel is without doubt the most striking of the whole monument, as it presents

<sup>1</sup> I lately discovered in a manuscript in the Brussels Library that della Riviera's real name was van den Vliete.



details not usually seen on the funereal monument of a Pope. In the middle of the panel three or four human heads are seen being carried around by a band of people while the symbolical figures of Justice, Peace, and Prosperity look on approvingly.

These trunkless heads are intended as examples of the innumerable executions which took place during the pontificate of Sixtus V; and, more especially, are supposed to have belonged to the worst brigands who infested the Roman Campagna here represented in the background of this scene of terror.<sup>1</sup> The regular flight of arches of the Acqua Felice loses itself in the horizon. On the left we recognise a part of the Coliseum, and recall to mind the anecdote of Sixtus V, who went there disguised as a monk. . . .

On the opposite side, we perceive the obelisk which he erected before St. Peter's, while an intermezzo of highway robbery is being acted in the centre.

The symbolism of the whole is very intricate. The artist's scope was limited to a few metres. We see how the Pope rendered the Campagna safe, and conducted the Acqua Felice through its vast area—once the scene of brigandage—combining Justice, Peace, and Prosperity, all in a mixture of classical and contemporary costumes.

<sup>1</sup> Sixtus' war against the brigands and the erection of the obelisk are also represented in one of the well-known "Tavolette della Biccherna" in Siena.





TOMB OF SIXTUS V.

*Photo, Mosconi.*

The brigands—many of them outlawed for political reasons or for murders committed in passion—had been a standing menace in the last years of Gregorius XIII. Sixtus V was their terror from the very first days of his pontificate. He at once directed his energies against them ; his relations with the different rulers in Italy were intended from the beginning to obtain the extradition of “bandits.” The word itself is explained by another of his legislative methods of internal government.

A “bando” is a public notification of any new measure. To bring forward a “bando” is called “bandire.” So a “bandito” is a person against whom, as a member of a dangerous sect, a public order of condemnation has been printed. Most travellers in Italy have observed along the railroad a frequent use of this verb : “Bandita la Caccia” (shooting is forbidden). It is quite characteristic that the number of “bandi” against brigands is still so great as to give them the name by which they are known over the whole world.

The “bandi” of Sixtus V are preserved in Roman libraries, in volumes full of living documents about Rome after the Renaissance. One “bando” forbids the people of the Campagna around Rome—besides the keepers of houses and cattle . . . and the population near the coast, always in continuous danger of corsair invasions—to carry arms. So that no “bandito” could

assume the appearance of an innocent peasant. Another threatens severe punishment against those who would bring food to the banditi, or give them shelter . . . or against "the shoemaker who would provide them with boots without the permission of the local authorities."

By those and many other means he succeeded, as the inscription tells us, "in mastering the licentious crowd of exiled and abandoned men," and "in restoring public tranquillity."

The other panel is much more gentle in character. Charity and Munificence—beautiful figures which would honour the chisel of Thorwaldsen—open the scene.

Behind, on the left, is the "liberation of the unfortunate who were detained in prison for debts"; on the right, a pitiful group of those "who went from house to house begging for food," and the house in which they were to be cared for.

On the last day of May, 1587, the beggars of Rome had been surprised by a papal decree, commanding them all to appear, within eight days, before a special commission, in order to declare their name and origin and the reason of their begging, and to go into the new poor-house.

Sixtus V himself went to inspect the hospital when it was ready to receive them, and gave orders for several necessities which the Home still lacked. He followed the example of his predecessor, who endeavoured in a similar way to



bring together all the beggars of Rome in the Convent of San Sisto, opposite the Baths of Caracalla. He met with resistance from the beggars themselves.

In order to impress the Pope, they tried a method which would seem quite a modern one. At first they declared that their numbers amounted to 3000—a figure far superior to the real one; but the preparations were pushed on all the same, though only 850 arrived. Nevertheless, they formed a pitiful procession as they marched over the Capitoline Hill in their ragged clothes, many being drawn in primitive hand-carts by other paupers. . . .

Renewing Gregorius XIII's charitable attempt, Sixtus V built a hospital, and united all the paupers under one roof. But a Roman beggar will be a free bird as long as the sun shines over the seven hills. They soon afterwards filled the city as before, and turned begging into a fine art, as an Italian writer has shown in a curious parallel between London beggars of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century and Roman beggars of the XVI<sup>th</sup> century.

All this happened within a few years.

In June, 1587, when the opportunity was offered to the Roman paupers to enter their especial home, they presented themselves in thousands. They were at once ordered to go and to return in more accurate numbers, with the possibility held out

that many would be sent back to their homesteads outside Rome with some recompense.

But, as soon as the Pope was dead, the great invasion took place, and Rome was again flooded with beggars; so that Sixtus' second successor, Gregorius XIV (whose reign began in the same year as the death of Sixtus), was obliged to shut them up again in the hospital of Ponte Sisto.

We have seen with what success these stern measures were crowned, after the death of the Pope who knew so well how to turn his words into deeds!

In the middle of the same panel is a graceful and serious procession of young girls presented with bridal gifts.<sup>1</sup> The dome of St. Peter's and one of the obelisks have been brought into this bas-relief. They had to be placed somewhere in the monument to complete the catalogue of the Pope's principal works.

On the other panel is the Campagna, its shore and sea forming the background. Those strange lines in the rear, which seem at the first glance to represent a bridge, are some of the papal "galleys." If you look carefully you can distinguish the masts and the riggings, with the long parallel oars. The waves of the sea are indicated, and, on the coastline, a tower can be distinguished. A group

<sup>1</sup> At several churches in Rome generous dowries are still given. A letter-box in the Piazza Poli for the purpose receives hopeful requests.

of men dressed in sacks, one carrying a big banner, accompany others, laden with chains, towards the city.

A whole chapter of the reign of Sixtus V is condensed in this marble picture: a chapter renewed from the reigns of his predecessors and to be repeated after him.

The tower is only one of an infinite file spreading along the coast of Italy. Thus you can see some of these signal stations from the bridge of Ariccia and from the platform of Albano, towards the burnished surface of the Mediterranean. They had already attracted the attention of the French philosopher Montaigne, who visited Italy for his health in the years 1580 and 1581. His travels have been published by the Italian scholar d'Ancona, in an edition which is a real model of its kind.

Referring to Ostia, Montaigne relates that they lunched in picnic fashion near the fortress—as tourists do now when visiting that ancient place and that remarkable stone pile. The French essayist was surely familiar with this style of architecture, for military construction had attracted him from his earliest youth.

Warning of an invasion of barbarians could reach Rome “in the twinkling of an eye.” In Ancona, he heard a cannon shot from “beyond the Abruzzi,” from the kingdom of Naples.

Towers rise at one mile's distance from each

other. The first one to discover a corsair ship sends a fire signal to the next watch-tower so quickly that the warning has been known to run in one hour from the end of Italy to Venice. This wireless telegraphy was worked with fires, flags, smoke, or cannon shots. The effect was fairly good. In one and the same day, for instance, the news of Sixtus V's election was carried from Rome to Florence.

The banner carried before the band of prisoners in the monument is that of the "Gonfalone," a pious society, which begged for money in order to help freed slaves, and was the only body allowed by Sixtus to collect for charity. The little group here is in sculptural art what the chorus is in the opera. They represent in a small proportion one of the solemnities which moved Rome—and in the first place the stern Pope himself—very nearly to tears. . . .

One day a procession of two hundred men and women, who had been slaves in Algiers, were brought to Rome by the "Sodalità del Gonfalone." Some of them had been forty years in that condition without losing their faith! To free them had cost 20,000 scudi!

The Turkish peril drew the Pope into unusual diplomatic relations. The subject was brought forward by Sixtus to the Cardinals in the Consistory, the Pope addressing the princes of the



Church at those sessions of the supreme council, in an elegant speech, as was usual.

He announced, according to the regular report (in a manuscript from the former library of the Barberini family, now in the Vatican), that at the beginning of his pontificate, 1585, he had sent letters to the Shah of Persia at a time when Persia was at war with Turkey, a war surely unjust on the Turkish side.

The answer to these letters had come—the Consistory took place on June 26, 1589—and two versions of the answer were read, one by Giovanni Battista Vecchietti, the other one by Paolo Orsini and a bishop *in partibus infidelium*.

Nevertheless, a “menante” of the time repeats this story under the date of June 28. He had heard of the secret, but places the mission to Persia as beginning under Sixtus’ predecessor, Gregorius XIII . . . alleging that “the Pope had asked the Shah to accept his Gregorian Calendar.”

Besides, he gives his own version regarding the alliance which the Persian ruler had proposed against the Turks. I infer that two different missions have been thus confused with each other. These indiscretions must have come to the ear of the Pope, for, at the following Consistory on July 17, he complains “that the secret had not been kept.”

Sixtus V had, like all great sovereigns, an eye



to the development of his sea-power. After instituting a special commission of Cardinals for naval affairs, he desired to see for himself how the coast was protected.

A real man of action, he went in person from Rome to Civitavecchia, negotiating at the same time other weighty matters.

We may suppose that these and other travels of the pontiff disturbed the peaceful lives of a multitude of persons, who already protested in their hearts against the unaccountable innovations and sudden surprises of their ruler.

We may be even more certain that this did not in the least trouble the energetic disciple of the biblical Prophet. He would have led the purpled council through the Red Sea if necessary.

They had to be ready to leave the city at a moment's notice, even without making the Vatican Court aware of the papal journey.

More than once Sixtus went to Zagarolo to study the water supply of his Acqua Felice. He was not at all romantic about his enterprise. When his sister Camilla, and his cousin the young Governor Michele Peretti, heard that the water had arrived a few miles from the city, they hastened to the spot and brought a bottle of the costly liquid to the Pope. But he declined it, saying that "it had no taste."

As to its flavour, the famous Pope was right. The history of the water supply of Rome has

shown it only too clearly, the Acqua Felice, beautiful for show on several fountains, is the least used of all the different kinds which adorn Rome and quench its thirst.

On his travels to Zagarolo—a little town on the way to Naples—he exhibited at the same time his good will and his bad temper, as shown on the following occasion: the convoy had rested in the middle of the Campagna, where a pavilion was quickly raised and lunch spread. The Pope joked merrily about the brigands, not without the intention of teasing the Cardinals, saying, “If such or such a brigand were to come now . . .” proud that he could bring forward the supposition safely, these criminals having ended their lives on the scaffold. Cardinal Colonna, who had sold his ground, with the sources of the Acqua Felice, to the Pope, and who was to entertain the company in his palace at Zagarolo, started an address to the party, declaring “how much he was favoured . . .”

But Sixtus, his mood already changed, cut him short: “It remains to be seen who will be the favoured one.” The Cardinal did not heed the warning, and complacently continued his speech, expressing his zeal for the Holy See and his readiness to sacrifice anything to subdue the Turks. In the middle of his oration he was stopped by a “Basta!” (enough) from the Pope, who shared with most good speakers a strong dislike for the useless talk of others.

The French Cardinal Joyeuse, for instance, was once severely snubbed at a meeting of the Consistory, just for speaking before he was called upon to do so.

Of the journey to Civitavecchia, an account has been preserved in a manuscript of the Vatican Library. The author, Guido Gualterio Sangenesio—who wrote the biography of Sixtus V—accompanied him on this journey, and used his best efforts to describe it in noble form, with a fair amount of anecdote.

Alaleone, master of ceremonies, was not taken on this journey, and makes a note of it in his regular account of the official movements of the Pontiff, declaring that he did not go, as he was not invited, and adding peevishly “that he did not even know what may have happened on that occasion.”

But History lost nothing, and Literature was the gainer by the fact that Sangenesio and not Alaleone has bequeathed this story to us, though the latter’s manuscript in the Vatican Archives contains many interesting facts.

The Pope, on his way towards Civitavecchia, began his journey by spending the night in the country house of Pius V—a short distance from Rome, along the Via Aurelia—the road he would have to travel by.

The next morning, at dawn, his suite of Cardinals and city notables joined him, early rising being the rule for the travellers.

On the first day, the convoy reached Palo, halting at a feudal castle, still to be seen from the railroad on the route from Genoa to Rome—the property of the munificent Cardinal Farnese.

Careful preparations had been made beforehand by order of the Cardinal, who frequently offered splendid hospitality to distinguished guests, whom he entertained for the night on their way from Civitavecchia, the port of Rome, where travellers from Spain and France landed.

The whole castle was adorned and rooms prepared for every one, a name over each door; the Pope's room richly hung in white silk. After the guests had expressed their appreciation of the welcome offered them, an excellent fish dinner was served.

However, in spite of all these preparations, the visit was not a success. For the whole suite of coachmen, soldiers, etc., were left to sleep outside in the open, as well as the horses and mules, and the noise they made interfered with the night's rest.

The journey was resumed the next morning before dawn, lighted lanterns being necessary for the first hour or two.

After lunch at Santa Severa, a monastery on the coast, four of the papal galleys performed some evolutions to the accompaniment of blowing trumpets and the thunder of their guns, grim faces bending over the oars, and desperate hands clutching them, as they swept the waters of the



Mediterranean. Not only rough hands of real gallows-birds, but also more delicate ones, so skilful at calligraphy that they could produce masterly imitations of the signature of others.

Not a few of those human propellers, chained to their hard labour, must have recognised as their floating prison drew near to the shore, the faces of men with whom they had had intercourse in days gone by.

They had come the same old road after a trial which had kept them for months and years in the dread of a death sentence. They had been thankful then that their life was spared . . . they wished now that justice had been pitiless.

The Pope declined the invitation to continue the journey by sea. Perhaps he consulted one of his physicians, Antonio Porto, who was one of the party; but we have no proof of this. He was not averse to medical advice; having been cautioned not to have a siesta after lunch, he used to spend an hour listening to the reading of some edifying book instead of sleeping.

On being pressed to sail, he answered that it would not be consistent with pontifical decorum, and that a sea-voyage, especially for a Pope, should only be undertaken in case of utmost necessity.

However, he allowed four of the Cardinals—one of them his own relative, Montalto—to take the sea-route. They arrived in Civitavecchia before he did.



The journey by land was difficult, and, from what Galesino tells us, all the travellers regretted that they had not taken the shorter and smoother route over the water. The Pope was very tired when he at last arrived at Civitavecchia; but it did not prevent him from enjoying the fireworks and illuminations, the whole nocturnal festival being described as a brilliant one. Even the cannonading from sea and land, which "made the whole of Civitavecchia tremble," is mentioned in Galesino's account.

The next day was given up to work, Sixtus having brought with him some architects who had to study the harbour. He desired to make of Civitavecchia a military seaport.

This had already been suggested by classical writers (Plinius), and the object of his inspection was the reconstruction of the port after the ancient plan.

One of the Pope's intentions was to bring water to Civitavecchia to supply the city itself and also the fleet.

After he had read and answered his correspondence, brought from Rome by special couriers, he gave orders to start for the mountains of la Tolfa, a range famous at one time for its production of alum, and containing the only available watersprings in that part of his estates.

He was entertained on his arrival by a somewhat original concert. The operation of extracting

alum necessitated the use of enormous boilers, which, to welcome the Pope, were hammered on by the workmen, the valleys resounding with the noise, "each boiler making a sound louder than that of the largest bell."

The Pope visited the alum quarries and admired the skill with which the workmen executed their difficult manipulations on high, narrow ledges of rock.

Here again the reception was in the best style of the time. A fountain poured forth wine for everybody; "and not only for the Swiss guard," humorously adds our author. It is mentioned on other occasions that a good drink was given to the same corps when the Pope dined out.

It is interesting to note the use already made of the mutilated German word "trink," now still used by the Roman population to describe copious libations.

After dinner he listened from the balcony to the improvised songs of the country people, who, accompanied by instruments, sang the praises of the Pope and Cardinals. The next day they started on their way back to Rome via Bracciano.

Every day during the whole of the journey Sixtus heard the mass, read his breviary, attended to current affairs as they reached him from Rome, and received an infinite number of visitors.

Galesino gives us a poetical description of the Pope's triumphal progress in the glorious Italian

springtime—old people with trembling steps coming out of their cottages to see His Holiness pass by ; children running to scatter flowers before him, mothers with babes in their arms crowding in his path . . . to all he gave alms and blessings, and they rejoiced to think that, for once in their lives, they had seen the Pope face to face.

On his return to Rome the Pope ordered the restoration of all the watch-towers along the coast, attended to the needs of the growing fleet, and busied himself about the aqueduct for Civitavecchia. And in November of the same year (1588) he went again to inspect the fleet and the waterworks.

During the following year he undertook another important journey connected with harbour works and with the improvement of the land in the immediate neighbourhood of Rome.

The idea of draining the Pontine marshes was suggested to the Pope by an engineer from Urbino, who urged that the ground would then produce all the wheat necessary for Rome, and the air of the Roman Campagna would at once become noticeably purer. The thought of utilising the old Via Appia as far as Gaeta arose at the same time. The Pontine marshes had already been improved by a canal still called the Fiume Sisto, which had cost 90,000 scudi ; the effect at the first moment seemed very successful, for the ground was actually drained, and the labours of Boniface VIII, Martin V, and Leo X seemed completed.

But even though another great work, following the direction of the Via Appia, was undertaken by Pius VI, the Pontine marshes, like the Roman Campagna, still await their ultimate redemption. . . .

The Pope's journey over the Via Appia led through the whole length of marshes to Terracina, where he intended to dig a good harbour, as he also desired to do with Old Antium, then called Porto di Ansa, and now Porto d'Anzio.

Sixtus V and his suite left Rome for Terracina on the 11th of October, 1589. The date means much to those who know the length of the hot Roman summer and the delight of the first refreshing days which may be expected in the month of October. In that year October must have been exceptionally cool, for Sixtus declared to the Cardinals, when they met after his return, that the weather had not been like summer nor autumn, but really like winter.

Five Cardinals accompanied him, Alessandro Montalto again being one of them. Including the guards and entire suite, the expedition must have numbered a thousand.

The Viceroy of Naples, hearing of their approach, at once sent his son—a boy of ten—with two ships and many nobles to Terracina.

The next day, after attending mass, the Pope came to the public square, where "refreshments" had been prepared.



The expression hardly seems adequate, for the "refreshments" had cost 15,000 scudi, and consisted in 100 cows, 100 pigs, 100 of each kind of birds and game in season; mountains of sweets of quaint Neapolitan names and shapes, precious wines, a "studiolo"<sup>1</sup> of ebony, inlaid with gold, containing gloves, amber, musk and other perfumes.

Sixtus afterwards gave a report of his journey to the Consistory. He supposed that the expenses for the development of the harbours would be rather high, but declared that, even should they amount to thousands of scudi, the work should be undertaken. He regretted that the two seaports, Terracina and Anzio, were so far from the city and other inhabited places.

The draining of the Pontine marshes was only one chapter in a series of public works which this energetic and far-seeing ruler had in his mind.

Even if we consider but one part of what journalists of his time ascribed to his credit, there remains enough to form a programme suitable to our own times. Indeed, what now appears to modern intellects as desirable innovations in the Italian capital, was in the five years of Sixtus V's reign the subject of public discussion, and the chief

<sup>1</sup> A cabinet, of which certain beautiful examples are to be found in the Roman Art Galleries—for instance, in the Palazzo Colonna and in the Capitoline Gallery.



topic of the Pope's conversation with engineers and architects.

Take, for instance, the Palace of Justice in the old Via Giulia, where the foundations of an immense building were left, and are still to be found. The original idea belonged to the time of Julius II.

A drawing in the Uffizi in Florence shows what was intended : a building ninety-seven metres in length, including a church, and designed to hold all the courts of justice in Rome.

According to the *Arvvisi*, Sixtus was anxious to demolish the old structure. It is fortunate that he left the foundations in peace, and did not disturb the mysterious harmony of that most suggestive street of Rome with some enormous courts of justice.

Another instance of his modern ideas was the proposed destruction of the Arco di Portogallo, near the Palazzo Fiano, in order to open a fine view of the Corso.

"Roma-al-mare" (Rome by the sea), a current expression in our days, and suggestive of new developments for the capital, must have been present before the fancy of the Pope, whose thoughts were ever bent on building and tracing plans.

He spoke of a waterway for his galleys between Rome and the sea by means of a new bed of the Tiber. Only the remark made before him, that





*Photo. Mosconi.*

RUDIMENTS OF THE PROJECTED PALAZZO DI GIUSTIZIA.

this would open an easy road to the Turks to come to "travagliare"<sup>1</sup> turned him from this plan.

It was said that he had the intention of making Castel St. Angelo an island in the city by leading a branch of the river behind it. This was most probably meant as a rather superfluous protective measure for this huge depository of his treasures.

Rome had been afflicted by an overflow of the river in November, 1589. Prisoners were drowned in the Tor di Nona, and the water came far into the city, to the Prati del Castello on the other side of the Tiber, where great damage was done. The Borgo was flooded, so that the Cardinals going to and from the Vatican had to pass through the long corridor connecting the palace with Castel St. Angelo, which still connects these two famous structures.

At that time the Pope is said to have projected a plan which would really have placed the Castle and the palace on a large island. The Tiber should be divided at Ponte Molle, on the Via Flaminia, the first bridge above Rome; one arm should pass through the valley behind the Vatican, already then called the "Valle dell' Inferno," from the baking furnaces of the lime quarries where the well-known Roman tiles and bricks are still manufactured.

This plan did not come to any concrete form ;

<sup>1</sup> Literally "to work," but, when used for pirates and brigands, to be understood in the special sense of pillage and rapine.

while another, seemingly much more arduous, received the honour of a papal brief. It concerns nothing less than the proposal of a Perugian engineer to open a canal from Tivoli to the square of Diocletian's Baths, the object being to bring wood and stone to Rome by the new waterway.

The quarries behind Tivoli are still in use ; the canal has never been made. The idea seems fantastic in its difficulty, but this Pope treated water and stone with the ease of a Roman Emperor. It has been said quite recently when a plan for new streets in Rome was discussed, that Sixtus V had already proposed a direct road from the Piazza del Popolo to St. John in Lateran. It seems, however, that such a street would have interfered with his erection of the Quirinal Palace, along the present Via del Quirinale.

The geography of that hill, under Gregorius XIII (1572-1585), is clearly indicated on a beautiful map of Rome published last year by the Prefect of the Vatican Library, Padre Ehrle, S.J.<sup>1</sup>

He discovered this map—executed in 1577 by a French artist, Etienne du Pérac—in the library of the British Museum. The reproduction is excellent, much better than those of the mediæval maps of Rome published by de Rossi, and known as his “Atlante” ; or the portfolio of reproductions

<sup>1</sup> See a note in the *American Historical Review*, October, 1909, by J. A. F. Orbaan.







SIXTINE MAP OF ROME.

of maps of Rome belonging to Colonel Rocchi's work about the city fortifications.

On the map of Rome, "before Sixtus V," as Padre Ehrle states on the title of his book in order to be at once understood by connoisseurs, the Quirinal is still called by the Latin denomination, which corresponds to the more familiar name of "Villa d'Este." The fact that in those times there were two Villas, each of them called Villa d'Este—one in Tivoli and one in Rome—might easily bring confusion.

From the line on the map the road might have passed behind the palace, the Viminalis and the Quirinalis, forming an ordinary up-and-down Roman road between the two churches . . . not without profit to the devout pilgrim, whose thoughts would not be hurried by his steps.

The new street would have crossed the old Alta Semita, later Via Pia, now Via Venti Settembre and Via del Quirinale. The Pope's mind appears to have been bent upon connecting the life of Rome with the mountain quarters, according to his programme on Porta Furba.

At the end of 1588 it was rumoured in the town that the Carnival races of next year, instead of being run on the Corso, would take place from the Porta Pia to "Montecavallo" (the square before the Quirinal, arranged also by Sixtus V).

The whole length of the street, with a splendid

view of the Esedra (the semicircular space before the Diocletian Baths, expensively laid out as a garden by Cardinal du Bellay) is to be seen in contemporary frescoes in the Lateran Palace, in which the works of Sixtus V are represented.

Among the plans, which he had not time to execute, was the erection of an obelisk near the church of Santa Croce, and two obelisks on Piazza Navona. He lent a willing ear to an architect who proposed to use the obelisks as sundials. The hours should be indicated, and also the directions of the winds, by lines on the pavement squares. A part of this proposal has been carried out in the square in front of St. Peter's.

Inventors of all kinds crowded round the enterprising Pope. One had found the "perpetuum mobile," another a special kind of bottle—most probably the measures yet in use in the Roman inns. Another found what seemed yet more wonderful, a certain yeast which made a loaf of bread larger without altering the quality and weight!

We are not surprised to read that somebody had found the secret of making gold, eagerly sought for in Florence by Francesco de' Medici, who had a special laboratory for this lucrative purpose. . . .

Sixtus V's many ideas alarmed the citizens of Rome. A *note douloureuse* of the time expresses their feeling well: ". . . Those poles,



placed throughout the city in straight lines across vineyards and gardens, bring fear to the souls of many interested persons who are not unaware that, in order to make a road without turnings, many a neck has to be twisted. But, on the other hand, it gives great public ornament."

The Pope looked upon it from the latter point of view, and generally visited some of his works of "public ornament" in construction, on Sundays after mass.

One Sunday, notwithstanding the variability of sun and wind, he went from the Trinità de' Monti through many of his new streets. After his walk he returned to the Vatican in his litter through the Via Condotti. In June, 1586, he was able to take his Sunday walk over the Piazza delle Terme Diocletiane, having heard the mass in Santa Maria degli Angeli. He inspected the ancient walls and houses as they were being demolished.

Another Sunday, in September of a later year, he goes after mass in Santa Croce to St. John in Lateran, to see the obelisk standing free from any cover and scaffold; he admired how ingeniously Domenico Fontana had hidden the lines where the different pieces joined. The next Sunday he went to Piazza del Popolo, where he also desired to see an obelisk and a road. Soon afterwards he went to Cerchi, the Circus Maximus, behind the Palatine, to look at the obelisk destined for Piazza del Popolo, and which contained the



best-preserved Egyptian inscription. Domenico Fontana, in his illustrated work about his constructions, has given these hieroglyphics in special detail, expressing a hope that these very clear figures might give some clue to a language which was still enigmatical in his time.

### III

## THE VATICAN LIBRARY

A WHOLE book might be written about the Vatican Palace and the treasures, unknown to tourists, which it contains. But such a book should be rewritten frequently, as the *terra incognita* in that great domain changes. Under Leo XIII, extensive dominions were opened to students, and visitors were admitted to the Borgia apartments.

Soon after Pius X had assumed the pontificate, these apartments were given up to his Secretary of State or Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the opportunities of visiting this part of the palace became very rare.

Now the Borgia apartments are again included in the general tour through the Vatican; but the entrance by the Bronze Gate is reinstated as the real palace entry. Visitors no longer pass along the Scala Regia!

On the other hand, passages through parts of the Vatican built by Gregorius XIII have again been opened to the public.

The Galleria delle Carte Geografiche deserves

more consideration than as a mere corridor from the Arazzi to the Stanze of Raphael. Its immense maps are ornamented at the foot by landscapes—painted by Bril, I believe—and well worth studying.

The reader of the preceding chapter may give a glance to the specimens of Italian ships sailing in the azure of the Mediterranean, and seek for the itineraries of Sixtus V's travels.

The maps have been restored by Urbanus VIII, as can be seen in many places by the inferior style of the additions, and in the pictures of Rome, where, for instance, Santa Maria Maggiore already contains the chapel of Paulus V. It is some years since anybody has been admitted to the former Vatican Observatory, also one of Gregorius XIII's buildings. We might have guessed that this was instituted by this Pope, so devoted to the study of geography, and who introduced the calendar bearing his name.

The instruments have been carried to the observatories in the garden, and even the characteristic little dome has been removed from the square tower. It now looks like a mere pigeon-house on the roof; but whoever took the trouble, in times when the entrance was yet open, to climb up the narrow spiral staircase, was rewarded by finding lofty rooms and a library decorated with frescoes. One fresco represents Rome, seen from the windows of the tower, in the days of Gregorius

XIII. The former "Specola" is now about to be entirely invaded by the Vatican Archives.

One of the chapters of the book could be called : The unknown entrances and passageways of the Vatican. There is, for instance, the gate from the Via di Porta Angelica—a long, gently ascending road which might lead towards a citadel.

A gate of square blocks opens in the solid foundation wall—a wall which is an enormous sub-construction, connecting two high points of the Vatican hill. An inscription in beautiful marble letters inlaid in the brick, dating from Julius II, runs along the wall above this opening.

Passing under the vault, you find yourself at once in the Cortile del Belvedere, its grasses nourished by the moisture of a fountain. I am sure that doors and winding staircases are concealed here, hidden in the thickness of the walls.

But here is the broad road through the Vatican. An inclined plane leads up to the higher regions, illumined by the large peepholes of real fortress walls. A mysterious light trembles under the vaults. The silence is only broken by some massive carriage, passing above towards the inner courts of the Vatican.

Soon you come out of the rear entrance of the Cortile della Sentinella, having crossed the Palace in its narrowest width. From that gate the road enters the Vatican on a level, through the Cortile del Papagallo . . . to the Cortile di

San Damaso, the principal square in the city of the Vatican.

Several royal staircases go up and down from this courtyard, but there is also a domestic one, a sort of servants' stairway, ending in an amusing way behind the pedestal of a statue. You might pass many times by this statue without observing the existence of a staircase. But this often happens to the traveller in Italy, where many lovely details escape him, lost as he is in the overwhelming power of great impressions.

Every visitor to Rome regrets that so small a part of the Vatican is shown. In order to study its complexity it is necessary to walk all around it, and especially to ascend the road which surrounds the entire wall enclosing the Vatican gardens, at the side and at the rear.

Then spend a morning in the Museum, and look out of all the open windows, even in the corridors connecting the different rooms. As a final touch, climb the dome of St. Peter's. But that is not possible to everybody, and I therefore give here a picture for the less Alpinistic among my readers.

Amongst the lost opportunities of knowing the Vatican is the careless omission of a visit to the Vatican Library.

I must speak about this Library, for it is one of the monuments of Sixtine Rome, which bear the characteristics of this Pope's taste in its most







THE VATICAN LIBRARY BARRING THE COURTYARD OF BRAMANTE.

appealing form. I beg even those who do not care for Sixtus and his time, and those not specially interested in the Vatican building, to see at least that part, my secret hope being to convert them from the opinion that, in Rome, there are only ruins and statues and the Renaissance, and nothing after it until Bernini.

Objections will occur as soon as one realises what the time around 1600 means, beginning with the pontificate of Sixtus V, objections which apply particularly to this period when taken apart.

I am ready to agree that the Lateran Palace has a stiff façade and a courtyard in which the charm of the handsomer Roman courts is lacking. There is in the works of Sixtus V a rigidity of which the Lateran Palace is the worst example. Yet, as we turn from Porta Furba, passing through the gate of San Giovanni, that very rigidity becomes dignity when seen against the evening sky. It helps to throw forward the emotional façade of the Basilica, a work of later times, next to the palace. The pictorial effect of black and white had not occurred to Fontana.

On the other side you find yourself in the Sixtine era: the obelisk, palace and façade, with the loggia, are purely Sixtine. Here the aspect of stiffness and general lack of elegance disappears. A special flavour, essentially Roman, emanates from the whole.

It takes some time to understand what is Roman

and what is not . . . and you can only fully do so when you have come to love every tiled chimney, and the typical Roman gates, and also the special music which the Roman puts in his pronunciation of the word "Roma," with an accentuated first syllable.

I will not try to explain what is ROMAN. I could not. Jacques Callot knew it better than Piranesi did.

To feel it, go to San Giovanni from the Coliseum. Stop at San Clemente, study the side entrance, a Roman jewel, and pass on to the square of Sixtus: Fontana, Egypt, sunshine, bricks, and Rome.

Before this impression evaporates hasten to visit the Vatican Library . . . when the mind has developed the image of that square at San Giovanni, and before other sensations and visions have blurred it in any way.

To go to the Vatican Library for the sake of Sixtus V indicates a desire to understand the time and civilisation which produced his buildings: the important historical era in which the Roman Catholic Church strengthened herself with her own spiritual, political, financial, and scientific resources.

This monument is in every sense an expression of that epoch of general history.

Sixtus V realised the worth of books from his







*Photo. Mosconi.*

THE VATICAN LIBRARY.  
*Built by Sixtus V.*

own experience, and valued the Vatican Library for its usefulness to the Renaissance and the Counter-Reformation.

When merely Fra Peretti, he started a private collection of books, which went on increasing until his pontificate. He kept a perfect account of his private library, which was published, with other notes about his life, all written by his own hand, in the review of the Roman Historical Society.

His particular tastes prevail in the choice of his acquisitions. There are books about the Franciscan Order, to which he belonged; about country life, which he loved; about Rome before he transformed it; accounts of the "Mysteries of the old Egyptians," where there might be found some references to his obelisks; and also a regular work about those strange monuments, inexplicable in his time.

He shared a taste for geography with his predecessor, Gregorius XIII, and took special note of which of his books contained maps; he possessed among others one volume concerning the navigation of the New World.

America was then in vogue. Gregorius XIII, in the course of his travels, noticed the portraits of Columbus and Amerigo Vespucci in the Villa of Caprarola. We find, of course, in Sixtus' book-cases, volumes about the antiquities of Rome which he wished to destroy, and the ancient aqueducts which he would revive.

But literature, history, and theology prevail in his library.

We may suppose that Cardinal Felice Montalto had learned to appreciate the Vatican Library—even if we have no proofs that he studied there.

In any case, the history of the times of Pius V and Gregorius XIII—a history through which he had lived—taught him the usefulness of manuscript arsenals in the Vatican in the struggle against Protestantism, and in establishing several fundamental texts of the Roman Catholic creed. Scholars came from all parts of Europe, especially from the countries along the Lower Rhine, where the old belief remained firm, to study the manuscripts and works of the Church fathers, Bible texts, and the first historians of the Roman Church.

The printing-presses in Rome and in the Netherlands rivalled in publishing beautiful editions signed with the famous names of Manutius in Rome and Plantin in Antwerp.

One of the most convincing results of this rivalry of skill and taste is the Bible in four languages, printed by Plantin in 1571–1573 for the King of Spain. Two copies of this work, with a remarkable map of the world as it was known at that time, were sent to Rome as presents: one to Cardinal Sirletus, and one to the Pope. The latter, a really gorgeous volume, printed on parchment, is in the Vatican Library to this day.

The best proof that Sixtus appreciated the importance of the Vatican Library is demonstrated by the care which he at once bestowed on it when he was made Pope. Again here, some arguments will show how in Italy everything has its reason.

A clear demonstration of the principles of reverence and honour for the treasures of human civilisation already formed two fair-sized volumes in Sixtus V's own time. Pansa and Rocca, who wrote those two books, had pondered deeply on the subject. Perhaps they had discussed it with Fulvio Orsini, whom we find mentioned in Sixtus' book of expenses (in the Vatican Archives MS.) as a "scriptor" with a modest salary.

There surely was, already in those days, a group of "friends of the Vatican Library," who put their intelligent heads seriously together when a question of importance, like the health and preservation of that mighty body, was brought forward for discussion.

The amount of information which we can gather from those two books by Rocca and Pansa, and from the description which the architect, Domenico Fontana, left of his work, is overwhelming. They explain the symbolism of the outer and inner ornamentation down to the most abstract detail. No square metre of wall has been left without some allegorical or symbolical composition.

This style of ornamentation was greatly admired throughout the whole XVI<sup>th</sup> century. The eye



had to wander around the sides of an aristocratic building, along the ceiling, into the very corners and edges, to find something to enjoy or to think about. Often the decoration of small panels full of mythological and biblical scenes is too insipid for our taste.

Scientists and theologians of the XVI<sup>th</sup> century no doubt enjoyed living in houses which offered a great number of puzzles to their guest. We can picture them walking around, testing each other's knowledge of the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid and of the less currently known stories of the Old Testament to supply an explanation of the scenes.

Roman history, zoology, geography, and complicated symbols of the so-called "emblemata" were also applied in decoration.

The paintings in the apartments of Castel Sant' Angelo, of the Villa Madama, of the Villa Giulia, and of the Loggie of Raphael, afford specimens of every kind.

Outside Rome, in the neighbourhood then most in fashion for rich country houses, between Viterbo and the Lake of Bolsena, around the Lake of Bracciano, and along the roads leading from there to the city, interesting examples of this ornamentation are to be found, chiefly at Caprarola and Bagnaja.

Thus an Italian XVI<sup>th</sup>-century palace is an open picture-book, illustrating the taste of the period. We now look upon these illustrations



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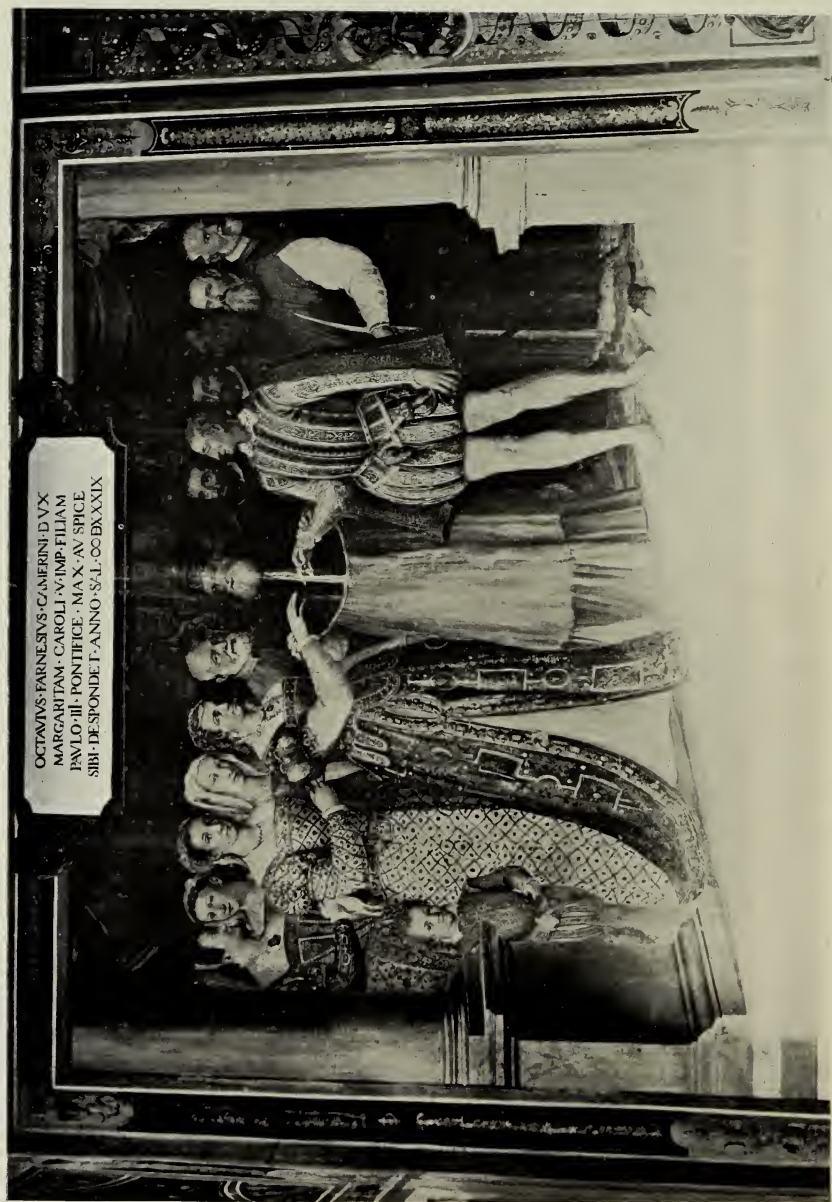


Photo. Mancioni.

THE MARRIAGE OF MARGARET OF PARMIA.  
(Fresco in Caprarola.)

with cold interest, but, at that time, they were a constant topic of conversation, and no doubt the picture of the marriage of Margaret of Parma in one of the Castle rooms at Caprarola must have inspired much animated comment . . . How proud must Cardinal Alessandro Montalto have felt when showing to his guests in Bagnaja the map of Rome in the Loggia, explaining the city's transformations. Our attention is still attracted by it, but there is no personal feeling in our hearts as we examine it.

Guests went from one villa to another, and had occasion for comparisons and combinations. If, in one place, they had seen the picture of some strange animal, in the next they could see the countries where those curious creatures roamed pictured on the world's map hanging against the wall, and learned people then had a fine opportunity of showing off their knowledge of Herodotus, Plinius, and the recent geographical discoveries of their own times.

The Renaissance had awakened a vivid desire for learning, and, for a while, the fine arts did not escape the influence of the new trend of ideas. One of the typical features of the XVI<sup>th</sup> century is the collaboration of the scientist with the artist, a collaboration which often degenerated into the dictatorship of the man of books over the pencil and brush of his more humble companion. The painter was socially inferior to the man of

learning, and therefore willing to execute his instructions. We marvel as we read long letters of directions written to painters by persons whose names were to vanish long before the frescoes. It was an honour for a painter to be taken from his sphere of lines and colours to the high Olympus, where pagan deities sat to him for his canvas.

Art, however, has an independence of its own, only to be tamed in times of decadence, and which escapes from its bonds as soon as it feels its own strength.

The learned painting of the ceiling shows it in the development of its ornamentation. There, from slight, insignificant bits of landscape, the new school of landscape-painting was born to flourish freely in the following century. See, for instance, on the above-mentioned maps of Gregorius XIII (*Galleria delle Carte Geografiche*), in the "Bath of Saint Cecilia," in the church in Trastevere, and in the Palazzo Lante at Bagnaja, near Viterbo, some landscapes, included in the decoration, but obviously painted for their own sake.

By accepting a servile position, depending for inner substance from the teachings of learning, Art lost its durable worth. An immense distance separates lesson from inspiration. The lesson evaporates . . . the inspiration remains. We

love the frescoes of Giotto, inspired by St. Francis, but look coldly at the frescoes of Taddeo Zuccaro and his school, taught by Annibale Caro.

In his own time, the art-historian Vasari was obliged to explain the frescoes of Caprarola to the public, and, to save himself trouble, quoted the letter in which Caro, the scientist, told the painter Zuccaro "how to do his work well." In the Middle Ages, theologians guided the hand of artists when the mysteries of religion had to be interpreted, but here the spirit is not elevated but pedantic, and Vasari did wisely to use the original letters, for he himself would probably have confused the complicated significance of the frescoes.

When the frescoes on the walls of the Vatican Library were still damp each visitor needed a learned guide. For, without a thorough explanation, many deep intentions might escape him, and many things become confused. Even then many a traveller had to give up the hope of carrying away in his memory a perfect understanding of the whole.

With the best intentions, we can no longer entertain a spirit of admiration for the ornamentation within and outside the Sixtine Library. We realise at once, before these soulless allegorical figures, that it is not worth our while to struggle to understand, that there will be no great satisfaction to reward us in the end. This causes our



attention to relax, and takes away that thrill of expectation which we feel at the sight of a real masterpiece, or just before the opening notes of a symphony.

We take it for granted that famous ancient libraries are represented opposite to each other, also great ecclesiastical councils; that all kinds of letter-types are shown, and the different Prophets and Sibyls who used the languages of the world to express sublime thoughts. One glance at the faded "graffiti" and we have done with the symbolism which had brought grey hair to the poet Guglielmo Blancus and cost many a sleepless night to Rocca and Pansa in their attempt to describe it fully. If we observe, in the contraposition of the decoration on the right and left walls, an allusion to the use of the Vatican Library for the Council of Trent, we have done as much as can be expected from any of our contemporaries, and this hasty survey may be sufficient to enable us to grasp the significance of this place.

Nevertheless, much entertainment and some surprises are to be found, in modest corners near the ceiling for those who are interested in the Rome of this period and in the works of Sixtus V.

At the entrance, we see him sitting between his two kinsmen, the Cardinal and a handsome youth in shining armour, the Governor of Rome, Michele Peretti. The book-loving Neapolitan Cardinal,





THE LIBRARIAN PLATINA RECEIVED BY SIXTUS IV.

*Photo Mosconi.*

Antonio Carafa, the successor of Sirletus, who died under the pontificate of Sixtus V, presents the plan of the library, held by Domenico Fontana, who is wearing with pride the gold chain bestowed upon him by Sixtus.

Behind is seen Federigo Rainaldi, the librarian, and other employees (all portraits, painted on wood by Facchetti of Mantua), to whose care were entrusted the 22,000 volumes of the library, most of them in manuscript.

The employees are carrying books, as a sort of identification! The prominent place, however, is not held by them or for them by the superintendent—as in the fresco of Melozzo da Forlì, where Sixtus IV receives Platina, in the Pinacotheca of the Vatican. Domenico Fontana, the gifted architect, is the man of the hour!

The painter of this group was not a psychologist; perhaps, if he had been, Sixtus would not have favoured him, and Domenico Fontana would have employed a more obedient master of the brush. But, if he had been, he might have placed in the eyes of those two—the Pope and the former mason's apprentice—a look of understanding, to last through the centuries as a lesson that Fortune is fickle and that energy and talent can attain high destinies.

From the time when Cardinal Montalto and Maestro Fontana used to ponder over small sums to be spent on the Villa Montalto, they had reached the point when a simple mandate from

the Pope allowed his architect-in-chief to draw large amounts from the papal treasury.

Volumes containing the accounts of Sixtus V may be consulted in the Vatican Archives. Receipts and expenses are entered month by month in an excellent handwriting. The Cardinals receive their regular allowance, 110 to 115 scudi a month, the barber 6 scudi, the shoemaker 4 scudi, and the tailor 6 scudi a month.

Michele Peretti received the money to pay the Swiss Guard. The head of a brigand was valued at 50 scudi. The highest entries are always to Maestro Fontana for different works "done for our Signore" (the Pope). These sums went up to 1000 scudi for a single month!

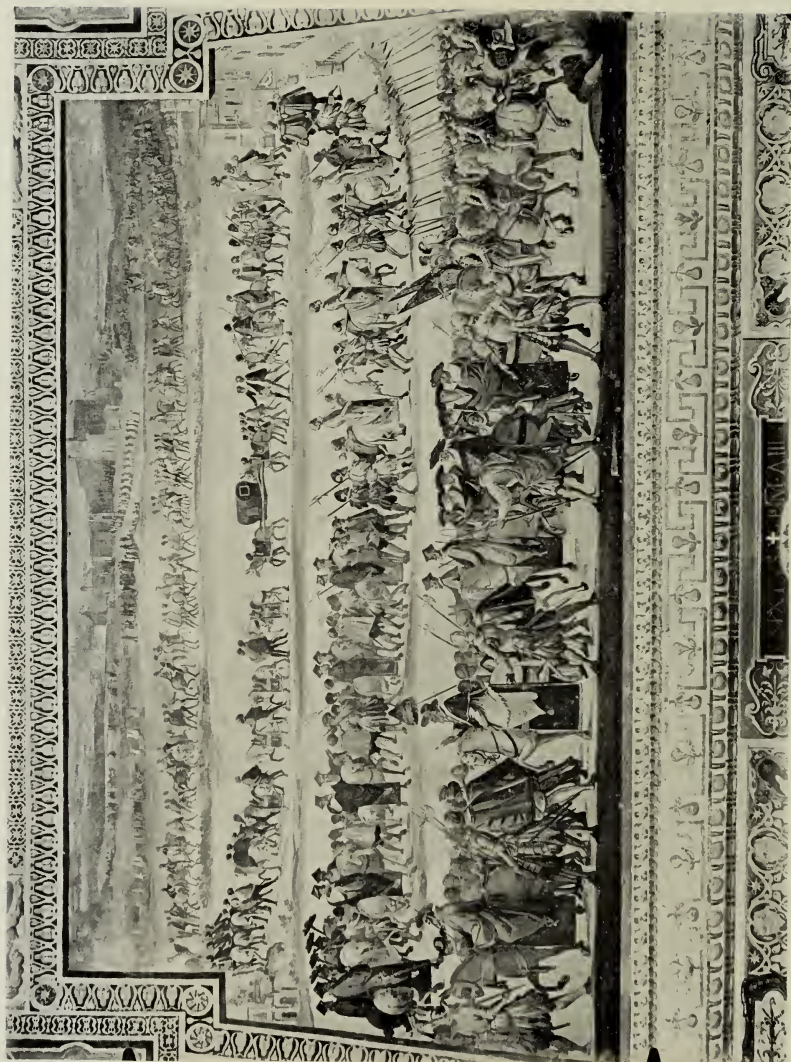
Among the entries, I also found the price of a golden chain presented to Fontana when he was knighted. His coat of arms shows an obelisk between two fountains, and some tools. This laborious man did not despise the simple instruments which led him to fame.

On the walls of his own house, situated in the Vicolo delle Palline, near the gate of the corridor from Castel Sant' Angelo to the Vatican, the first house on the right through the arch, he represented all his works.

They were still there in the first half of the nineteenth century, and have been reproduced. Now the house is used as a low-class hotel, and its frescoed walls are covered with paper!







THE POSSESSO OF SIXTUS V.  
(*Italian fresco.*)

To judge from one reproduction, given by Prince Massimo in a very interesting book about Sixtus V's Villa Montalto—now demolished and covered by new quarters, near the railway station—it must have been worth studying. They may still exist, in photographs taken long ago, but perhaps lost in the Capitoline offices.

Happily the same ill fortune could not affect the similar but more complete paintings left by the Pope on the library walls of his own house. These frescoes of the achievements of Sixtus V remain in splendid condition to this day.

Above the portraits of the Pope, of Fontana, and of those interested in the founding of the new library, is represented the solemn *possesso* (taking possession of the Lateran), with which, in great state, a new pontificate was always ushered in.

The three vital points of that *possesso* were indicated in the fresco:—

The Capitol, as in the Sixtine era.

The Coliseum.

The Lateran, as it was before the changes brought about by Sixtus.

The procession winds through the whole picture. But neither the numerous riders in elegant costumes, others in full armour, the stalwart Swiss Guard, nor the vivid group of Cardinals can draw our attention away from the Pope, mounted on a white horse, followed by two figures, also riding.

Those quaint persons so near to the Pope were two Japanese princes, brought on a mission to Rome, in the last days of Gregorius XIII, by a Jesuit priest. The city was already familiar with those young men, who had travelled during three years in order to reach Europe ; they astonished the papal court by their perfect manners, and the citizens by their strange habit of drinking tepid water.

Their behaviour contrasted favourably with that of a Muscovite mission received by Gregorius XIII, of which the uneducated members committed a series of mistakes, not only at complicated court ceremonies, but also against the rules of breeding.

The Japanese princes knew a little Portuguese and Italian ; they declared that they had not expected so many honours or they would have brought many more presents and a more numerous suite. Their genial smile and courteous ways won for them a warm welcome in Rome, and they were present at several great events of the new pontificate. They were, for instance, in the church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva when the Pope bestowed dowries upon maidens ; they had witnessed his coronation before, and had received an invitation to visit his Villa Montalto, near Santa Maria Maggiore. They even went to Caprarola, where their astonishment reached its height, according to the journalists of those days, who



also chronicle that the Japanese princes liked Rome very much but desired to return to "their Antipodes"! One of the princes fell sick on his visit; a doctor was called to attend him from the Villa d'Este, at Tivoli, by order of the Pope. When the prince was cured the mission resumed its journey, stopping at Florence on the way. No new Japanese mission would henceforward arrive in Rome before 1615.

For further details see the Italian book of Prince Boncompagni, which gives full information about the two missions under Sixtus V and Paul V.

Sixtus V may have remembered, in this gorgeous cavalcade, another ride, mentioned in his biographical notes in the year 1556. Being obliged to go to the general meeting of the Franciscans in Brescia, he hired a horse, taking it on the condition that he might sell it for a certain price. The owner must have had his doubts about this quadruped. Fra Felice Peretti soon realised that it was *di triste razza* (of a poor sort), and sold the animal to a policeman for 9 scudi. This horse is lost in oblivion, like many others which may have carried the monk or, later, the Cardinal.

The stuffed skin of the favourite horse of Sixtus V was in existence until the nineteenth century. Prince Massimo, whom nothing escaped, mentions this equine relic in his book about the Villa Montalto, where it was preserved, and quotes



the horse of the last Duke of Urbino, preserved for 130 years in a house of Pesaro.

Another fresco in the Library, of equal size and importance, shows the coronation on the steps of St. Peter's. This function takes up but a small space, and, though placed in the centre of the panel, its importance is altogether surpassed by the scenery around it.

Here we have St. Peter's still in its earlier form, the ancient basilica already overshadowed by its domeless usurper. The mind of the newly crowned Pope already turns to the transformation of the whole square. Soon a committee of Cardinals and experts will decide upon the transfer of the obelisk—the only one left standing—from that corner to the left, where the building of the Inquisition rises so majestically on a line with the church.

For the study of the history of St. Peter's, this fresco and an older one in the Palace of the Cancellaria, and some old prints—one representing a feast in the court of the Belvedere—are extremely useful.

As a transition between the Middle Ages and the modern development of the Roman Catholic Church, it has a symbolical significance, Sixtus V being the Pope who built the dome, and his reign being the preparation and foundation of various improvements to the interior and exterior, which would enable the Roman Church to renew its





THE PAPAL SQUADRON.  
(Vatican fresco.)

strength. The dome is one of the most striking assertions of the triumph of the Renaissance over the Middle Ages.

The reign of Sixtus, powerful but spiritual, began from the very first days following the Conclave.

Scattered round the walls in the panels, we find other instances of the practical side of the new endeavour to impress the world with the high spiritual example of Rome. Sixtus V courageously felt that it was not sufficient to open the books of the Church Fathers, but that the real needs of the Roman Catholic religion had many roots in this earth.

He was proud of his worldly measures, and had them painted in the Library; he challenged by this act the criticism of the Bishops, scientists, and Prophets of the Church, of the Councils and libraries all around, who might be shocked by the following bold symbols:—

Abundance—a lion shaking a pear tree for a herd of lambs;

Safety—a lion charging a wolf;

Morality—dowered brides;

—and by the picture of a safe, with a lion above it, the Lion Sixtus V.

In that same line, rank the proud galleys, swinging their banners in the wind, on a somewhat heavy sea. This is not the symbolical ship of St. Peter, but a body of mighty men-of-war, intended to secure the safety of the Ecclesiastical State



against attacks from the sea. The allegorical figures of Rome and the Tiber look complacently on, and Romulus and Remus play quietly on the seashore.

This panel deserves a moment's attention, as it gives an exact representation of battleships at the end of the XVI<sup>th</sup> century.

The crowd of galley-slaves is not even seen. They are only part of the engine which beats with mighty strokes of the oars the waters of the Mediterranean. Their lives ended miserably on these *galere*; chained to their benches, bent with fatigue under the whip of their inflexible masters, they remained until some charitable bullet, aimed at their floating prison, swept off the cannons and the soldiery on the upper deck, and drowned the beautiful lanterns and proud pavilions in the rear.

Galley-slaves were treated as an article of commerce. The Viceroy of Naples provided a large number of them for the papal fleet.

From Civitavecchia they were sent to Spain to form crews in the Invincible Armada. While the whole of Italy was looking out for the happy news of the fleet's successful landing in England, and reading the signs of the sky, the heart of many a relative of some lost son on the galleys must have trembled for his fate.

Not only politicians, but also humble citizens, must have gone into mourning when finally the messenger brought the news of the Armada's



defeat, proving the misinterpretation of the thunder-cloud over Rome, which had been taken to portend a Spanish victory.

Galley-slaves, when they did not succumb to their hard life, certainly became very athletic. A foreign engraver, Henricus Goltzius from Haarlem, who was in Rome in the year after Sixtus' death, went to Civitavecchia on purpose to study their unusual muscular development.

The style of the time following Michelangelo affected Titanic forms, even in scenes which did not call for any exhibition of muscles. So that if a real athlete had to be drawn, a Hercules in full action, or an Atlas carrying the world, something extraordinary had to be produced, and only galley-slaves offered this specimen of mankind, in which brute force was the only quality and reason for existence.

With the next panel, representing Santa Maria Maggiore, we enter into the peaceful category of the works of Sixtus V. The Sistine Chapel is already attached, the Pauline Chapel is still missing, of course. As a landmark of Roman topography of modern times this representation of Santa Maria Maggiore gives an arithmetically sure indication of the period.

The chapel to the left of the onlooker who sees the basilica from the obelisk side, dates from the time of Sixtus V (1586), or after.

The one to the right, from Paulus V, or later ;

at least, so it appears on the genuine maps of Rome.

This last restriction can cause much trouble when not observed. Many of the plates which served to print the views or maps of Rome have been touched up as years went by, and one pontificate followed another.

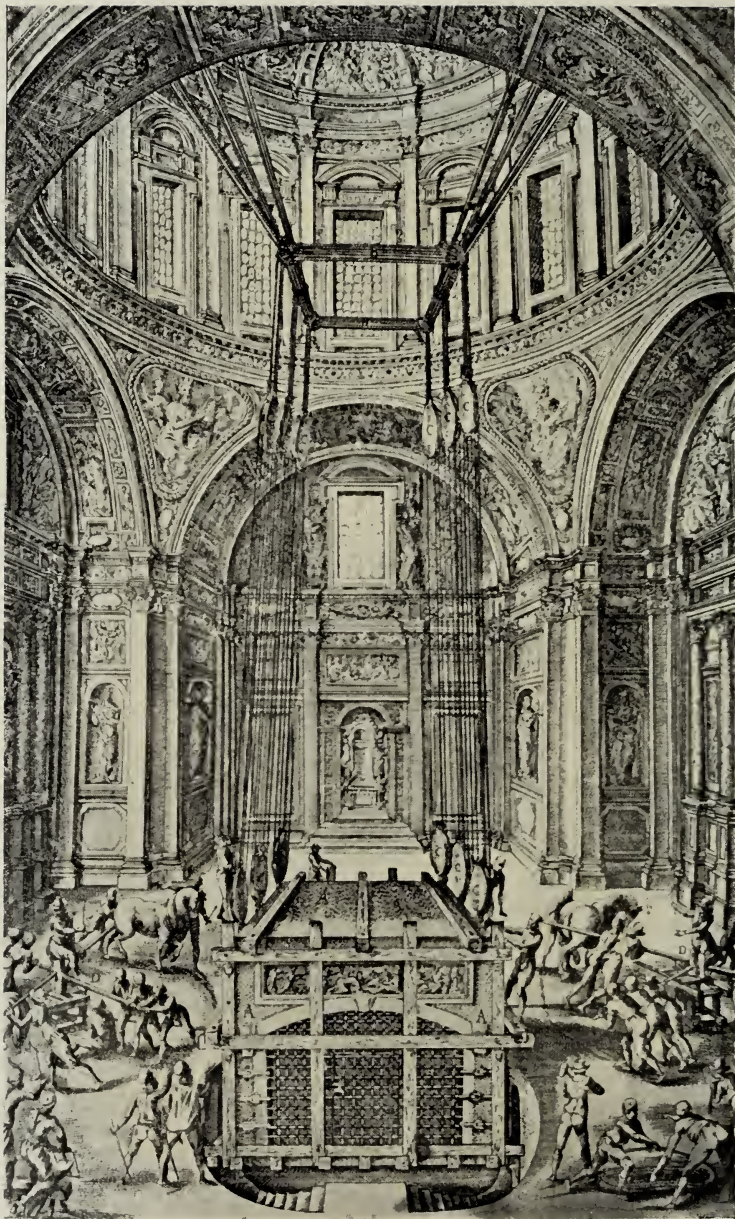
As long as the editor who owned the plate wisely took care to simplify the whole plan, no great harm was done to the print. The new touches are easily detected, and the map is treated with due suspicion. But when there are only a few corrections we risk a certain confusion, for we then have but a distorted image of Rome. The fact that the original date is left on the plate adds to the general mystification.

In the Galleria Geografiche a good miniature of Rome is painted on a map.<sup>1</sup> Here we are warned against possible mistakes. The Gallery dates from Gregorius XIII, and an inscription is not lacking telling us that Urbanus VIII restored the whole, so that we find both chapels in Santa Maria Maggiore.

The reader will be lenient with these details, for they open a field of observation by which he can extend his own pleasure and develop his own taste. Why should we continually dwell on ancient Rome? Has it not been difficult enough to locate the seven hills and all their edifices? Besides, we

<sup>1</sup> This map is published in the *Mélanges de l'École Française*.





SANTA MARIA MAGGIORE.  
LOWERING OF THE CRADLE-CHAPEL.



never wrong classical Rome when we turn our attention to more recent centuries. Its traces surround us, as the frescoes around the library show. In this very fresco of Santa Maria Maggiore . . . those ruins on one side . . . I will let you tell me what they are. The presence or absence of the Septizonium is another chronological indication. Even the vanished ancient city has come into prominence on the more modern maps; its classical past has by no means sunk into oblivion.

On the same side of the Library, Santa Maria Maggiore is twice again represented in the fresco. The last one of the three must be specially mentioned, or the Sistine Chapel might not be recognised; it is represented in a vertical section, so as to show the ingenious way in which Domenico Fontana included a chapel within a chapel.

This panel belongs to a series of technical illustrations, of which the book of Fontana about his own buildings gives other examples. And, among many other interesting books published in Italy on similar subjects, we may quote a pamphlet describing the efforts made to reach the top of the obelisk, in order to change the weather-beaten cross placed there in the reign of Sixtus V.

The other panel shows the translation of the remains of Pius V to Santa Maria Maggiore, to the chapel where the two Popes—Pius V and Sixtus V—now rest together.

In both frescoes, we distinguish on the left the



villa of Sixtus, in earlier years, the Villa Montalto, his favourite abode, even after he became Pope. He divided his time between the Vatican, the Quirinal, and this Villa, never staying in the Lateran Palace. The last-named residence must have been somewhat uncomfortable, for the Cardinals even did not occupy the apartments appointed for them in the new palace.

The Vatican was very conveniently placed for services at St. Peter's. Under Sixtus V a new staircase was built at the recently closed entrance to the Stanze, reaching the basilica in the Gregorian Chapel. The paintings on the vault of this staircase were executed by Lattanzio Bolognese, and the new communication opened in March, 1587. We read in the Master of Ceremonies' diary (Alaleone) for the first time at that date, that, for every service, Sixtus V went to the Gregorian Chapel through the new staircase.

Those diaries afford a valuable assistance to the historian ; they were kept privately by the Master of Ceremonies, who wrote down many personal observations and anecdotes, often not hesitating to criticise the Pope. Alaleone, for instance, says somewhere that the Pope was so impatient at some ceremony that he would have caused even a Solomon to lose his head.

Under Sixtus V the Quirinal, which had been inhabited already by Gregorius XIII, though merely as a guest of Cardinal d'Este, began to be

used as a regular residence for the Pope, especially in summer. The Villa d'Este on the Quirinal became the Palazzo del Quirinale, as has been already mentioned in the second chapter. Gregorius XIII had placed a large gilded bronze dragon on the top of the first part of the present Quirinal Palace, which had been the part assigned for him to build. Sixtus V at once took away this emblem of the predecessor whom he loved so little, and replaced it by his own coat of arms, the mountains and star.

All the relatives of Gregorius XIII and the Cardinals appointed by him were displeased with this action. After Sixtus' death his own emblem was taken away, and, by order of Urbanus VII, the insignia of Gregorius XIII were reinstated.

The Roman custom was that the Pope who actually instituted a public work should put his own coat of arms on the wall, in a spot where it easily attracted attention. In exceptional cases this custom was not followed, and the exception then had a special significance. For instance, Urbanus VII ordered that the Vatican building should be proceeded with, but had the emblem of Sixtus V placed everywhere, meaning that he only finished the work of his predecessor, without any intention to follow his example as an ardent constructor, thus reassuring those who had been alarmed by the expenses of Sixtus V!

The Vatican Palace remains to this day the

residence of the Popes. I read somewhere that Sixtus V wished the private apartments to have a full view of the obelisk. But here again powerful reasons intervened, and instead of viewing the splendid panorama and single obelisk, the Pope sought to make way for the sunshine to come in.

I am told by an authority on the history of the Apostolical Palaces that all the sides where the sun does not penetrate are unhealthy, explaining by this circumstance the short lives of the Popes who stayed in the quarters around the Cortile del Belvedere.

Sixtus V acknowledged this fact also in the inscription above the door in the Cortile di San Damaso. He started the work, when perhaps already feeling the effect of unhealthiness, in April, 1589, some months before his death, which took place in the Quirinal.

In the beginning of his pontificate, he cared very little about injuring his health, and would walk up and down in the open corridor along the Cortile del Belvedere till late in the evening. It is mentioned specially in May, 1585, that "the air of the Vatican in general was at that time worse than usual, and the Pope not of the strongest constitution."

Sixtus V took but little sleep, and quiet nights were very precious to him. So, a man of practical decision, he ordered away from the palace at that valuable time, chickens, dogs, and drums,

in order that his sleep, obtained with much difficulty, might be undisturbed.

This was in the beginning of his pontificate, a period in which every action of a new Pope is noticed. He not only sent away the innocent disturbers of his night's peace for the sake of his health, but also, perhaps for the same reason, discharged five doctors at once.

Malicious journalists remarked that "most probably a sound diet would keep up the health of the papal family." The great historian of Sixtus V, Hübner, has left a note throwing a lurid light upon medical art in the days of Sixtus V. He says that "on reading many prescriptions, he did not marvel so much at the strange formulæ, as at the strength of the persons who resisted those medicines. . . ."

As to the diet of the papal "family" ("famiglia," signifying household, but more especially those who eat in the house), we have some information from a manuscript in the Vatican Library. The Pope took a certain kind of bread, "Pane papalino," in loaves of fourteen ounces each. Every day was consumed, for the Pope's own table, from the *cucina segreta* (secret kitchen) three pounds of veal and one chicken; on fast days: two pounds of good fish and a quart of olive oil. Every week were used: four pounds of bacon, one and a half pounds of lard, and two pounds of flour. About four and a half scudi were spent every month



in fresh eggs, cereals and soups. . . . Besides this, six brooms were purchased every month, probably to sweep the few crumbs which fell from the parsimonious table. . . .

Urbanus VII tore to pieces the *ruolo di famiglia*—the reduced list of servants, and at once brought the personnel of the papal palace up to a more luxurious footing.

Sixtus liked to try everything himself. One day he ordered that the Villa del Papa Giulio should be prepared for him (foreign visitors of importance usually spent the night there before making their solemn entry into the city the next morning). But this time the doctor protested, pointing out that the villa was too small, and the air there very bad in July; the Pope therefore changed his plans and went to the Quirinal.

In summer every Roman becomes impatient to leave the stifling city. The Cardinals often left Rome before the great heat came on. At the first symptoms of approaching summer great plans were made at their head-quarters as to which villa they would go to for the hot season.

There is no evidence that Sixtus V spent any summer during his pontificate away from Rome. He divided the summer months between the Quirinal—where Consistories were held, even in the intense August heat—and the Villa Montalto.

To ensure peaceful sleep for the whole neigh-







VIEW OF THE MEDICI GARDENS.

*Photo. Mosconi*

bourhood, he forbade the ringing of the bells of Santa Maria Maggiore during the canicular nights. He did not give up his nocturnal habits, and we read that on one summer evening he walked till late on the Piazza Termini with the famous archæologist Fulvio Orsini, who conversed with him about old medals.

The Pope was not at all afraid of the night air, the anonymous chronicler writes, so it is to be hoped that Orsini shared this indifference to the damp summer atmosphere in the vicinity of gardens. If he held on this point the usual Roman misgivings, he had to conceal them, like the old Cardinals who could not always follow the Pope on his wanderings in the daytime, and often had to disguise their fatigue.

The Pope occasionally took his supper or lunch at the Villa Medici. Even when we consider that the luxurious vegetation of the Villa was then only in its beginning, and that its marvellous decoration lacked the gorgeous pines, the picture is a romantic one. . . .

The Pope sits alone on the loggia, taking his supper, while, below, Rome sinks into the silence of the night, weary from the tropical heat. He lingers, wide awake, his active brain working, his eyes piercing the dark, looking for spaces where he can build up his new city . . . until the escort carrying torches takes him back to the Quirinal by his own Via Felice (Via Sistina).

His meals were brought to the Villa from his own kitchen. This could not have been because of suspicion, but must have been one of his habits of economy applied to the benefit of others. At least, we may deduce this from the fact that, on one occasion, when lunching at the convent of the Franciscans at Ara Coeli he brought the wood for the fire and even the faggots to light it. No other reason can have influenced him but the thought of sparing his host some expense. The monks, nevertheless, were fully prepared for his visit.

Sixtus V did not honour with his presence—as far as my notes tell me—any of the festivities of the Roman world. Cardinal Montalto and the Pope's sister, Camilla, sometimes represented the Peretti family at social gatherings.

Comedians were the great success of the evenings, especially when the piece was played by the company of the Desiosi, who created a furore in the whole of Italy and found grace in the eyes of Sixtus V, though they lived in constant fear of papal censure.

A feast consisted of a dinner, a ball, and a comedy. When Ciriaco Mattei gave a feast on the occasion of the marriage of his son, Giovanni Battista, the list of the guests included fourteen Cardinals, who ate apart with Cardinal Mattei, a brother of the host. Sixty ladies of the Roman aristocracy and a number of prelates and nobility

occupied six tables, all being served at once "with great order, quietness, silence, and splendour." Before and after the meal there was some dancing, and at the end the comedy of *Four Alike*.

After a dinner given by the Duke of Sora another comedy was performed, called *Love's Vagaries*. Its leading characters were an Italianised Frenchman, a Norscino (meat-packer), a pedant, a Roman servant girl, and a Neapolitan. These figures might be found on the programme of a modern Italian burlesque. In this play satire was chiefly directed—how little the world has changed!—against voluntary divorces, and lovers who talk too much about their love affairs. Besides this, the company performed pieces on topical subjects, including the banished brigands, who had not been punished severely enough.

Montaigne saw the Desiosi Company at Pisa in 1581, and devotes a short note to them in his account of his journey to Italy. In Rome they met with special favour from Cardinal Montalto, Sixtus V's nephew. One of the stars of the company, Diana Ponti, went to France later on, as d'Ancona tells us in the excellent notes to his edition of Montaigne's travels.

These Italian artists of the stage often went to France. In the XVII<sup>th</sup> and XVIII<sup>th</sup> centuries the Italian comedian became a popular personage in France, frequently represented in prints,



paintings, and even in porcelain figures. Their characteristic faces and exuberant gestures could not fail to claim the attention of engravers, painters, and other artists of the time.

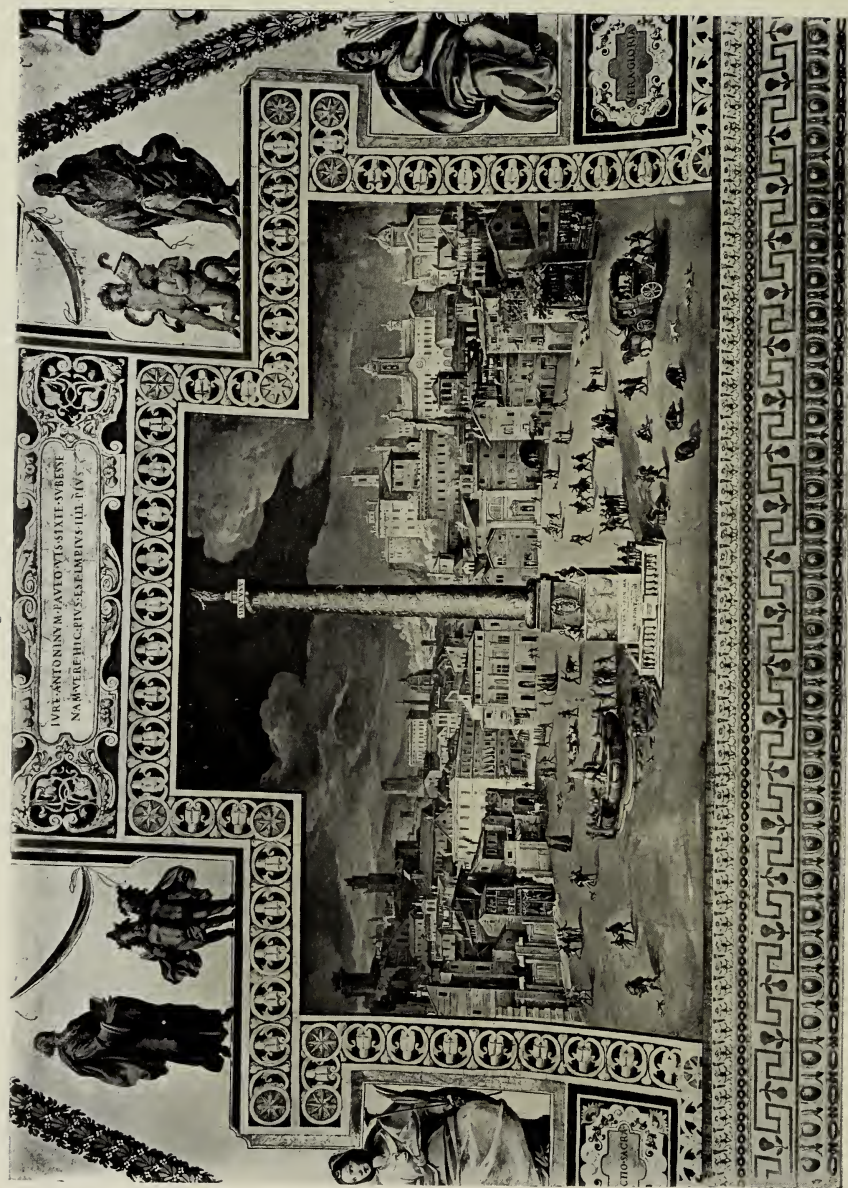
Theatrical compositions also wandered from Italy into France. In the time of Sixtus V a certain kind of opera existed already. In the first half of the XVII<sup>th</sup> century opera in fable form was very popular in Rome.

The Desiosi under Sixtus V went through times of danger to the existence of their company; later their theatrical performances were allowed through the intercession of the Spanish Ambassador. This permission was accompanied by curious conditions characteristic of the time, but also to be found in the history of the theatre in other countries.

In the first place, performances were forbidden on Fridays in Lent. Part of the profits had to be handed over to charitable institutions, and the public were forbidden to throw missiles of any kind on the stage. This last rule fell under the general "Bando" for Carnival, in which Sixtus V showed great severity. Once only, when an abundance of snow covered Rome at Christmas time, the Pope failed to hinder the citizens from amusing themselves with the mock artillery of snowballs.

The public paid two "giulj" for a tragedy. The company received ten scudi for an evening when they played in a private house.





PIAZZA COLONNA IN THE TIME OF SIXTUS V.  
(*Vatican fresco.*)

One of the most interesting panels of the Library represents Piazza Colonna in the days of Sixtus V. A great deal of Rome is compressed into the background. It is a good exercise for eye and memory to distinguish buildings like the Temple of Neptune, the Collegio Romano (not completed then), San Marco, the Gesù, etc.

The square was different from what it is nowadays. The column of Marcus Aurelius was there of course, but it is surprising to discover from the fresco that the elegant basin of the fountain was already there; it was thoroughly restored after Sixtus V, but has preserved the same shape until now, still presenting some unmistakable Sixtine lions' heads.

The scenery on this panel appeals to those who know how to appreciate the Rome of bygone days—such as the pilgrims and the first pioneers of European tourism saw it. Perhaps the squares of the Eternal City were a little too frequented by domestic animals of all kinds, but the painters thought their presence perfectly natural and brought in the whole animal population. Afterwards, Clemens VIII issued a Bando (1597) to forbid the public strolling of pigs; all vagrant ones to be at the mercy of the people.

It is interesting to note how painters always endeavour to animate street life by means of different groups in attitudes of external motion



and full of expression. In old prints and paintings single persons running are usually depicted, who salute each other as they pass, their coats waving in the wind. Then, standing firmly rooted to the spot, groups of admiring or astonished people. . . . Here, for instance, we see a group looking up and pointing towards the column, doubtless talking about Sixtus V, who had restored that amazing piece of antiquity. But, in reality, the busy world is better shown by the ordinary life in its usual routine. . . . like that woman throwing grain before the chickens, this man driving his loaded donkey across the square, or the blacksmith who examines the hoof of a horse. . . . For such a mixture you have to look at the fresco of Piazza del Popolo.

Let me call attention to the curious shape of the shops. The aperture for the door and the shop window are all one open space. In old engravings of Rome that form is general, and you find them still in country places: I saw them in Pales-trina. The original example is at Pompeii.

On all these frescoes the streets are not paved ; at least it would seem not, as every square presents on a smaller scale the image of the seven hills without a trace of blocks. And yet there must have been a pavement, for, at a certain moment under the reign of Sixtus V, we read of the proposal to replace stones by bricks in the street pavements. One of the reasons given



was that the dwellers of the street would suffer less from damp. The first public highway to be paved was the Via Felice (Via Sistina).

Here the expense (an early instance of a development tax) was to be partly paid by the inhabitants along the street—the so-called *frontisti* (who had houses facing the street). The taxes for paving the other highways were to be paid by those who had horses and carriages! Under Sixtus V a street-cleaning contract was sold to some private enterprise, but before that it used to be in the care of the mayor of the city.

The town authorities once tried to forbid the extension of laundry ropes across the streets. But as soon as Sixtus heard of this innovation by the “*Maestri di Strada*” (masters of the streets) he sent for them to hear his opinion about the matter, and, in consequence, the by-law was cancelled.

The Piazza Colonna fresco gives every proof that the Roman population still made use of the old privilege. It looks like a laundry parade intended to tease every *Maestro di Strada*!

Regulations concerning public health, public safety, customs, and sumptuary laws were quite advanced in the days of Sixtus V. His own precious health was guarded by several doctors from *le Marche* (the marshes), that part of the country which includes the provinces of Pesaro, Urbino, Ancona, Macerata, and Ascoli, where Sixtus was born.

One of these doctors, Durante, who remained famous in the history of Italian medical science, wrote a little book, *Treasure of Health*, dedicated to Camilla Peretti, "that she might learn how to take care of her brother the Pope." In the works of this same doctor there is, according to Marini's book about the doctors of the Popes, a first mention of the introduction of tobacco in Italy, brought there by Cardinal Santacroce from his nunciature in Portugal—as his ancestors had brought to Rome the wood of the Holy Cross (Santa Croce).

The authorities gave great attention to sanitary measures intended to arrest the entrance of epidemic diseases. A sharp control was kept at the gates of the cities, as well as at the ports, against suspected cases, and all foreign travellers at the end of the XVI<sup>th</sup> century complained that they were requested by the gate patrols of the different towns to show a health declaration ; in Rome they also suffered the confiscation of any printed books they brought with them. The latter were handed over to the Inquisition. Montaigne relates amusing incidents in connection with his little travelling library.

A strong example of quarantine is given in the time of Sixtus V by the harbour-master of Genoa. Galleys bringing money from Spain were suspected of coming from infected ports, and the sailors were not allowed to touch the shore before

they had thrown away their clothes, put on new ones purchased in the city, and even been shaved—such being the severe laws of the city.

In Rome the health committee kept a tight hold of a class of dealers whose profits were made by the illness of others: the druggists.

Among the “Bandi” of Sixtus V, we find one composed by the “protomedico,” in which he distinguishes between the real pharmacists and the barbers, who might also deal in drugs. This combination of a barber and a cheap surgeon has extended to many countries. In Rome it is even classical, from the times of Castor and Pollux, the patrons of this noble and numerous guild. Until quite recently, a barber at the corner of the Arco di Pantano still had for a sign a picture of a bleeding arm, a very realistic painting in oils. Such signs bring to mind the use of edged tools in a barber’s hand with the client’s consent to bloodshed and may yet be found in some forgotten corner of Rome.

The “protomedico” made it difficult for the barber by stating that nobody could be a pharmacist who did not understand sufficient Latin. He also prescribed that they should use the best sugar for the syrups which they offered to the suffering world.

The moral health of the public was also cared for, and the Bandi of Sixtus V touch many vices of the time. There are Bandi against gambling,

slandering in words or pictures—the editors of *Avvisi* find here a severe warning—and against betting.

The Pope was specially set against the vice of gambling, indulged in on every occasion by the Romans and regularly exercised by the bankers. The people gambled on the most incredible subjects, taking tickets in the great lotteries. They would bet, for instance, on the names of future Cardinals ; whether the Pope would go to Mont-alto or not. . . . The Pope amused himself, at least so the *Avvisi* tell us, by looking over a copy of the lists which circulated in Banchi—the business quarter of Rome—containing different quotations for the Cardinals he might intend to nominate. Some referred to important personages whom he had never had in his mind.

The betting system reached its highest point between two pontificates. From the moment that a Pope died, lists began to be circulated with the names of different Cardinals who might possibly have a chance of receiving the tiara. The numbers changed every day, and the lists were sent daily from Rome to the different courts of Italy.

In the same desire to anticipate the future, great abuse was made of astrology. A law enacted by Sixtus V forbids palmistry and other speculations on popular credulity. When one of the numerous astrologers did not obey this regulation he spent some unpleasant hours exposed on



the pillory, and the public called him "an astrologer who could not foresee his own fate any more than the fate of others."

Some superstition was attached to the person of Sixtus himself. Wednesday was his lucky day. Even the sound sense of Domenico Fontana admitted this little bit of astrology in his solemn book about the works of his sovereign master. He notes that Sixtus was made a Bishop, a Cardinal, elected Pope, and enthroned all on a Wednesday.

An interesting testimony about life in Rome in Sixtus V's time is given by a Dutchman who travelled in Italy and studied the Eternal City very thoroughly, in 1587 and 1588. An account of his travels has been published in the *Archivio della Società Romana di Storia Patria*. This Dutchman, Buchellius, remarks that the Romans dressed quite simply, as was also observed by Montaigne. Severe laws against luxury were set forth in a papal bull issued by Sixtus. The list of wines and foods given by Buchellius as being common in his days still corresponds to a certain extent with the Roman bill-of-fare of our time, and is already called by him "sparing" (*parco*). Vermicelli and macaroni have a place on the menus.

Writing about women, he states that they were kept in the house until twelve years of age, and were then soon married, not to please themselves, but according to the choice of their parents. He evidently regrets the danger attached to kissing



a young girl or a lady. "That which, for our women, is an honour is for them considered a shame," he says, with a sigh. This was one of this writer's weak spots; he did not share the remarkable wisdom of Michel de Montaigne in his observations on the weaker sex, and on this point their travelling notes are diametrically opposed to each other.

There were no lady travellers at that time to tell us anything about the men of Sixtus' days. If there had been, they would no doubt have taken some interest in an important subject of discussion: whether men should or not wear a beard.

An excellent contemporary writer, Bartolomeo Catena, strenuously defended the beard against the invading custom of clean-shaving. He says in one of his letters: "It is well that those who have to lead and govern should have a long and fine beard. And I can assure you that the government of cities and provinces has been given to more than one prelate because he had a long and fine beard, otherwise he were not worthy the honour."

Amongst the measures taken by Sixtus V for public improvement is one which I have already mentioned: the bringing together of the beggars in a poor-house. One of the frescoes in the Library, next to that of the Piazza Colonna, represents a full view of this gathering. Nowadays the poor-house is reduced to one block in a curious corner

of Rome near the Ponte Sisto. Parts of the ancient building may yet be seen in the high palazzi, between the Monte di Pietà and the old bridge.

The scenery of the fresco is again typical. We see there the Apostles Peter and Paul engaged in serious conversation, next to a crowd of poor Romans. A small realistic incident is the dog that barks at the beggar. Even dogs have their social traditions!

I am not sure whether a couple in the background, handling wooden sticks, is playing or fighting. Their pastime might be one or the other: fighting some mock battle with their crutches, or perhaps playing a kind of hockey, which is also represented on a fresco opposite this one, with the fountain of Moses.

The bridge built by Sixtus IV, and named after him "Ponte Sisto," also appears on this fresco. For one moment I hoped to find here an early specimen of Roman folklore, but I am not sure enough about the necessary ingredients of the story. They say it "brings luck to see, passing on the Ponte Sisto, a loaded ass, a priest, and a soldier." Perhaps more is required for the fulfilment of the wish. This certainly does not seem to be enough.

Ponte Sisto was naturally connected with Sixtus V by the Romans, and an old story is related that the Pope wished to pass the river

in disguise, before there was a bridge. The boatman having asked him for an exorbitant price, Sixtus punished him by a heavy fine, which was to be used in building a bridge, thus frustrating the dishonesty of ferrymen. The popular imagination could not admit that Sixtus V, who had built so much, should not have at least one bridge to his credit. (He really had started building one over the remnants of an old Roman bridge, but far off, north of Rome, over the Tiber at Borghetto, on the road which the pilgrims used to take towards Loreto.) The people chose to attribute to him one of the most interesting bridges, the Ponte Quattro Capi (Four Heads). I take for the following story the authority of the Roman folklorist Zanazzo, who relates it in true Roman style in the second volume of his very entertaining collection, *Tradizioni Popolari Romane*, published in 1907:—

“As you all know, Sixtus V, who reigned five years, built five streets, five fountains, five obelisks, five bridges, and left five millions in Castello.”

The reader should know that Castello in Rome means Castel St. Angelo, and that Palazzo means the Palazzo Apostolico, the Vatican.

“One of the bridges he had built was called ‘Quattro Capi.’ Do you want to know why it was so called?

“Well, the Pope was obliged to build up that bridge, which was on the point of falling in. For

this work, four good architects were employed ; while they were at their work they started quarrelling, one of them nearly being killed.

“When Sixtus heard of this, he did not waste much time in having them all arrested and beheaded on the bridge, where their heads were placed before the public.

“After some time he ordered the heads to be carved in stone and placed there, thus giving the name to the bridge ‘Quattro Capi.’”

This anecdote gives the number five, as it has been explained in the learned Latin book of one of Sixtus’ contemporaries. Besides, it contains an allusion to the executions made on Ponte Sant’ Angelo, so frequent under Sixtus V’s reign, that an ironical observer of the time says, “This year there have been more heads on Ponte Sant’ Angelo than watermelons in Banchi.” The four heads are explained and the good people of Rome are satisfied !

The Tiber Island is also shown in this fresco still looking very mediæval with its high towers. Trastevere also looks warlike. In these days we have to seek for those towers in Rome. Not many are left, but in the Middle Ages the Eternal City must have presented the same appearance as does now “San Gimignano delle belle Torri,” the Pompeii of the Italian Middle Ages.

Along the Tiber, watermills give a more industrial aspect to the scenery of river life. In



olden times the Tiber was certainly a more interesting stream than the present canal. Rowing and swimming races and even the famous duck-catching must have taken place in the very heart of the city, between Ponte Sant' Angelo and Ponte Sisto.

Most of these water sports are now banished further up the stream, above Ponte Margherita, where on summer days the *fiumaioli* (rivermen) are in full swim, performing fine gymnastics and celebrating quaint feasts, worthy of a poem by Ovid, like the one in which he describes a popular festival on the Tiber.<sup>1</sup>

Roman life is also portrayed on the Piazza del Popolo fresco. Take the hunter returning from outside the gates, as a more or less symbolical figure. The pleasure of shooting makes in Rome the strongest connection between town and country. In the city, the sportsman dons his hunting suit early in the morning. At night he will bring back a sunburnt complexion, much mud, and a bag filled by fortune and his own ability.

In the time of Sixtus V, the art of catching wild animals had reached a high point. Human intelligence had to invent where instruments—fire-arms or arrows—failed. Hunting scenes, showing the hunter and his companions trying most com-

<sup>1</sup> This fragment can easily be found in Peck and Arrowsmith's *Roman Life in Latin Prose and Verse* (American Book Company), much to be recommended to the attention of all who like to refresh their Latin in Latium.



plicated traps on innocent birds, fill open spaces in the decoration of country houses. The different animals in the Loggie of Raphael have been explained by Leo X's strong inclination for the chase.

An engraver of Dutch origin, Stradanus by name, residing in Florence during the second half of the XVI<sup>th</sup> century, has left reminiscences of several hunting-traps in a series of drawings. In one of these the hunters stand behind a cow covered with drapery. A fine set of tapestries was executed, after Stradanus' drawings, for the shooting-lodge of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, at Poggio Cajano, showing all the possible tricks of the trade. Again we have the decoration of the rooms distinctly connected with the purposes of the building, and, at the same time, intended as a subject of learned comparison and conversation. The same drawings were reproduced in the North in 1570, and again and again in later years by Galle, in a set of prints; a cheaper way of bringing them to the knowledge of the sportsmen of the civilised world.<sup>1</sup> There is also an extensive literature of all kinds of handbooks for hunters beginning with the XVI<sup>th</sup> century.

The favourite shooting-ground was at a considerable distance from Rome. We still read of hunting parties at Magliana—the famous castle of

<sup>1</sup> *Stradanus te Florence, 1553-1605*, by J. A. F. Orbaan, p. 52. The drawings were reproduced in the *Burlington Magazine* of 1903 and 1904.

the Popes, who were devoted to hunting in the XVI<sup>th</sup> century.

Sixtus V's relative, Cardinal Montalto, and another, Cardinal de' Medici, sometimes went to that typical spot on the banks of the Tiber. This Cardinal, Ferdinando de' Medici, the future Grand Duke of Tuscany, hunted chiefly in the more distant part of the country between the Lake of Bracciano and the sea. On one occasion, he returned from the chase at Cervetri, where there was a fine shooting-box, the property of Paolo Giordano Orsini, Duke of Bracciano, with fifty-one wild pigs, thirty-four wild goats, and thousands of birds. He provided the whole court with venison, remaining only for some important religious ceremony, and then rushing back to his sport, having left for that purpose his dogs and weapons at Bracciano.

Sixtus V was too much wrapt up in his building plans, and also probably too old, to indulge in the fatiguing pleasures of the chase. He did not even care to follow the hounds or to look on as did Leo X.

Of other exercises, we have only one example in the paintings of the Library, in the second room, the entrance to the so-called "secret library," which once filled those rooms, all marked with the armorial bearings and the works of Sixtus V. (*Segreto* signifies select or private—the best part of something, put aside for the use of

the master. We have a clear example of this in the “secret garden” of a Roman villa—a choice bit of ground, enclosed and separated from the neglected fields around it.)

Opposite each other are represented, in the fresco, a beautiful view of Rome and a tournament. Until late in the XVII<sup>th</sup> century, tournaments remained in vogue in Rome, and many books have been written about this favourite amusement of the Italian nobility. A number of fine prints bring to our mind the great tournaments on the Piazza Navona.

The “teatro del Belvedere” under Sixtus V had been divided into two parts, thereby reducing the space set aside for tournaments. Some symbolism of the spirit of the times is seen here; the building devoted to science dividing, by an insurmountable barrier, the sporting ground of the knights.

The series of Sixtus V's works, undisturbed by a few broken lances, goes on its way. Canonisations take place in cathedrals and churches, and other pontifical ceremonies continue; as, for instance, the consecration of the “Papal Chapel” in Santa Sabina.

Sixtus V had restored this highly interesting basilica on the Aventine by pulling down a wall from the centre and repairing the roof and pavement. An inscription in the church refers to this work. The remarkable part about this tablet lies

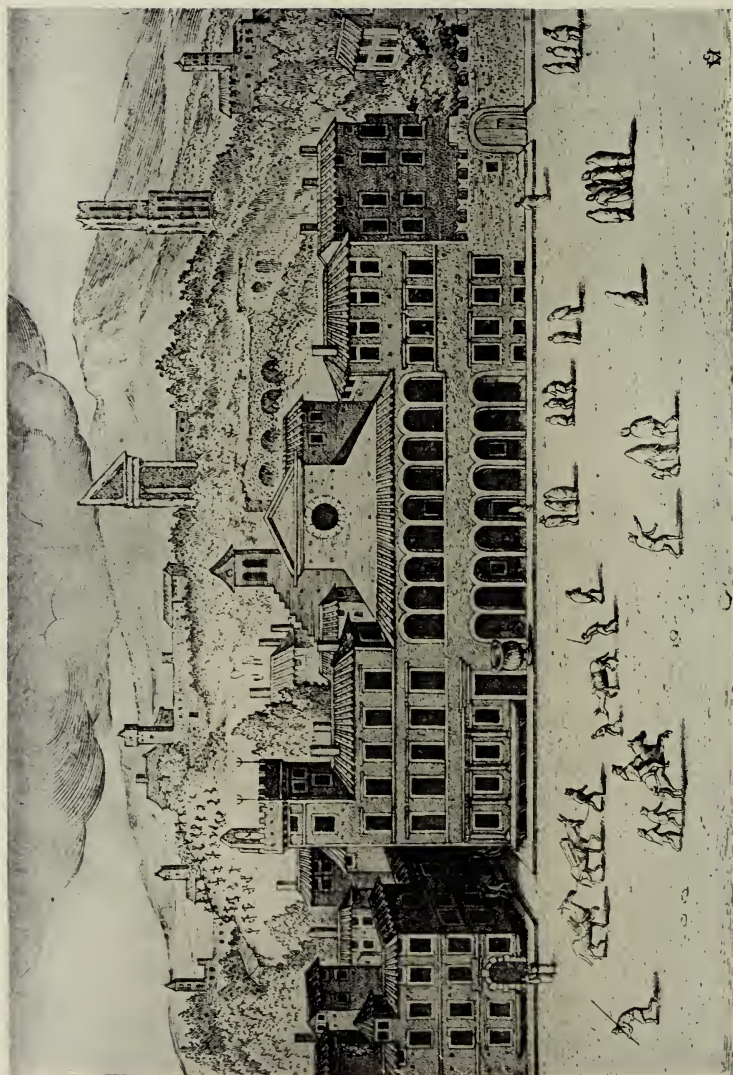
in its imitation of the writing and abbreviations of early Christian inscriptions. Here the name of Baronius may afford some explanation. Soon after Sixtus V, this famous annalist of the Roman Catholic Church, with Ciacconius the biographer of the Popes and Bosio the archæologist, visited the Catacombs with the object of making investigations. I do not believe I am saying too much when I refer to the inscription in Santa Sabina as a practical application of the first conquests of a scientific Christian archæology.

Like other men of genius, Sixtus built up with one hand and destroyed with the other. There we have the Lateran of the Middle Ages—a fresco in the smaller room of the library—which he demolished, and a large view of St. Peter's as it should have been after the original plan, and the erection of the obelisk, with its entire setting. Each of these frescoes is a document, eagerly studied by the historians of St. Peter's, of the former Lateran and of Nero's Circus.

In the smaller panels are shown : Civitavecchia, provided with a water supply ; Sixtus' birthplace, Montalto, enriched with public works ; the Dioscuri of the Quirinal. Again and again symbolism : the crowned heads of Europe listening to the Sixtine Lion ; the same Lion in another picture watching the safe with its immense treasure, and surrounded by other animals, symbolising the Cardinals who held the keys to those millions.







S.S. APOSTOLI, A CORNERSTONE IN SIXTUS V'S LIFE.

The treasure safe and the Lion, with other Sixtine emblems, still exist in the coat of arms of the "Rione Borgo" (the fourteenth district called Borgo), made in 1586 out of the Città Leonina.

This safe is mentioned in the account-books of Sixtus in the Vatican Archives, Domenico Fontana being entrusted with the making of this big article of the papal household; the workmen's wages for bringing the money from the old to the new treasury are also entered.

Behold the celebrated Fountain of Moses, represented in the state-room, not in its most flattering features. The panel shows Porta Pia in simple form in the distance. The scenery includes the usual figures of the man with an ass, the beggar holding out his palm, the hockey or polo teams. Note the fresco of Santa Maria Maggiore with its old façade towards San Giovanni. The Pope is amongst the group on the left hand; the youth standing near him may be Michele Peretti. In conclusion, study the Roman map with all the Sixtine works over the door from the Libreria Segreta to the show-room. The document speaks for itself.

Some of the manuscripts, now on public view, were curiosities before Sixtus V brought the Library to its present place.

Montaigne has recorded his visit to the Vatican Library in 1581, and gives a description which

corresponds perfectly with Pansa's documents written nine years later.

The Library had retained its mediæval aspect, the books being chained to the desks and also kept in trunks. Some were taken out to be shown to Montaigne, who looked in the first place for his favourite authors, Seneca and Plutarch. The latter's work was most probably shown him in a manuscript bought by the famous traveller and archæologist Cyriacus of Ancona, who had paid a very large sum for it at the monastery of Mount Athos.

He also saw the manuscript of St. Thomas Aquinas, and remarked that Thomas wrote a bad hand, worse than his own. Of course the book of Henry VIII against Luther, sent by this monarch to Leo X, which had been robbed of its rich binding in the pillage after the siege of Rome, interested him deeply, as did also the illustrated manuscript of Virgil.

He says that it was generally easy to see and even to use the Vatican Library. He had been discouraged at first by the French Ambassador, who had not known the way to obtain an entrance to the library, probably as he did not desire to "pay his court" to the librarian, Cardinal Sirletus.

Sirletus, one of the most learned men of the XVI<sup>th</sup> century, had been appointed Cardinal Librarian in 1570. He died in the beginning of Sixtus

V's reign, in October, 1585; on his tomb in the church of San Lorenzo in Panisperna he is called "a patron of the learned and of the poor." Touching examples were told of his charitable spirit, and, besides his goodness of heart, he was known for other fine qualities, being called also a "walking library" by Marcus Antonius Muretus, certainly not an easy critic of learning. On many occasions he was seen to take off his own shoes in order to give them to the poor, and in winter time would bring home young faggot hawkers, make them comfortable, teach them the catechism, and afterwards buy their bundles of firewood. These anecdotes are like many others from the life of St. Carlo Borromeo and St. Filippo Nero, a most popular Roman saint, who even won the heart of Goethe. One of the stories they tell about him points again to the general sympathy prevailing in Italy for children. He took a crowd of boys out with him in the Campagna. When they made too much noise he asked them to stop if they could, but, if they could not, to continue. This anecdote betrays real Italian reserve and sympathy.

Cardinal Sirletus had collected for himself a beautiful and important library of books and manuscripts. After his death, his collection was for a moment in danger of being exported. The King of Spain, having been notified by a clever agent in Rome, became eager to buy the whole



library for his own collection in the Escorial. But Ascanio Colonna, a Roman Cardinal, purchased the entire treasure, and placed it in his own palace. After his demise it was again in great danger of exportation to the Ambrosiana in Milan, only being saved by the timely interference of the Duke of Altemps, who recovered it for his own house. Once again it was in peril in the middle of the XVI<sup>th</sup> century, when it was nearly sold to the Queen of Sweden. This time it was Pope Alexander VIII who kept it in Italy, buying it for his house "Ottoboni," and, from this Ottoboni family, the manuscripts came into the possession of the Vatican in 1740. They have had a better destiny than the printed collection of Cardinal Sirletus, lately sold at two auctions in London and Rome, and now quite dispersed.

The history of one part of the Vatican Library is told here very concisely, demonstrating that the care given by Sixtus V to this share of his papal treasure was not in vain. Kings and queens disputed with princes of the world, and of the Church, for possession of the contents of those solid cedar-wood bindings—the Ottoboniana.

Since the death of Sixtus V, the papal seat of learning has become more than doubled. The Heidelberg Library, the Palatina, has been brought to the Vatican; the Urbino Library containing the splendid illuminated manuscripts now shown to the public in Sixtus V's room; the collec-



tion of Queen Christina of Sweden, who became a real Roman and died in the Eternal City ; and finally the library of the Barberini with its manuscripts, papers, and the wainscoting of the entire room, which has now been reconstructed in the Vatican.

If Sixtus V could arise, step out of his portrait, and walk around, he would marvel at the aisles of cases with manuscripts, joining to the right and left his "secret library" situated at the end of the vast room, and containing all his works. The system has been kept up—copied from a classical Roman description—of having the low bookcases perfectly closed against dust and damp.

Downstairs, in a large room, he would find a beautifully equipped reference library leading to the study-room of the archives, where a monumental coat of arms in the ceiling reminds us again of Sixtus V. On the wall of the studying-room of the Library may be recognised a faded Sixtine coat of arms, and, around, the portraits of all the Cardinal Librarians, including Sirletus, Carafa, and Baronius.

The Pope on his resurrection walk would chiefly be pleased to see his iron law written on the same marble tablet at the library entrance ; and, on the other, the remembrance of his foundation, read with reverence by the thousands who pass the doors, which Leo XIII opened to the studying world.

#### IV

### DOMENICO FONTANA

IT is a pity that Vasari did not write the biography of Domenico Fontana. The architect came into notoriety too late to figure in the book of the painter-architect, or rather "art historian," Vasari.

The style of Vasari's writing would have suited the period of architecture, inspired in part by Domenico Fontana.

The Barocco, with its great play of light and shade, is already in the *Vite* (*Lives*) of the excellent writer of Arezzo.

Everybody who wants to acquire a deeper knowledge of Italy should read Vasari. His whole being and writing is the expression of a time which is perhaps more interesting than any: the first half of the XVI<sup>th</sup> century; and he himself is really a representative Italian of a very fine type.

In active life, Vasari would have been most antagonistic to Fontana, but would have treated him well if he could have finished his biography with a tombstone. They would have been stumbling-blocks in each other's way, both having enough activity to exhaust the means of a Mæcenas.

Incredible energy and fertility are characteristic of the great men of Italy as well as of any country in the world. For them, the *dolce far niente* could only be the device : *Repos ailleurs*.

Vastness of conception and steadiness of execution are to be found in great and small proportions equally in the works of Leonardo da Vinci and Giambattista de Rossi, or of Domenico Fontana, Bernini, Piranesi, and Baronius.

To approach the productions of any of these men means many steps towards a better understanding of Italy, which rises in the estimation of our time, as we measure merit from work accomplished. How often we regret that an artist of genius left but a few paintings, a single opera, or one little volume of poetry, and reproach him with the laziness which hindered the outpouring of more beauty. In judging artists we must act delicately, though we are not unjust in condemning their lost time and in longing for their unborn creations. Supposing Handel had written nothing but his Largo—only a hyperæsthete could forgive him the other hours of his life.

A common misunderstanding often leads us astray in judging many things Italian. There are surprises. For instance, the foreigner gasps in astonishment to hear that Raphael died so young, though hundreds of his works fill the museums of Europe, even wandering to the United States.

A few names that I have already quoted are

easy and instructive examples. Walk into any library of importance and look up the works of the archæologist de Rossi; of the annalist Baronius; of the *omnis homo* Leonardo, and you will at once become convinced of their labours by the numbers of folio volumes. Piranesi's plates still fill the Calcografia Reale, and Bernini's works bloom in every corner of Rome. As for Vasari, anyone who has studied the history of art beyond the most summary catalogue has at least met with his name. In Germany, England, and France his reputation has been growing within the last ten years, and his personality has been studied from a literary and historical standpoint, his *Lives of the Painters and Architects*, translated in the three languages of those countries. His treatises on art are also sharing in this awakened interest. In their turn will also come his "letters," which are the surest proof of his unceasing activity. Lately his private archives have been discovered—artistic circles are looking forward with great interest to the publication of these documents.

We have no such collection from Domenico Fontana. The correspondence of the Italian artists, a pure source of knowledge about their careers and intimate life, is copious in some cases, precious in others, and often leaves a void when it would have interested us specially. What we have is published, but scattered over many books,







DOMENICO FONTANA FROM HIS OWN BOOK.

some of which are themselves old and rare, so much so that it is not easy to give statistics.

Fontana has left written reminiscences of himself, not unlike what greater artists of his country have done before and after him. While most of the others mentioned their own works in some dissertation on art, he went straight to the subject, writing and printing a book in folio, describing in detail his career as architect of Sixtus V. The first edition was published in the year 1590. Copies of this book are not rare, but it is difficult to find them complete, including the large engraving of the obelisk's erection and all the scenery around. This print is valued highly, as it represents St. Peter's in a former state; but it has long ago been torn away from most of the copies and sold separately. Even without this precious print the book is worth having, for it contains a large number of other interesting engravings. The text is Italian; the style, though influenced by the epoch and written in the solemn tone of an address to the Pope, reveals the man through the beautiful print.

We meet him in effigy on the title-page. There he is, behind his working desk, with the model of the obelisk of St. Peter's carefully upright in his hands. He has donned an elegant dress without forgetting his heavy chain of "Cavaliere." In a symbolic gesture, his thumb holds the chain forward towards the obelisk, for they belong to each

other in his life's history. Painters, poets, and architects of the XVI<sup>th</sup> and XVII<sup>th</sup> centuries, when presented with such high marks of esteem, never left them at home when their portrait was to be painted for posterity!

The engraver has not endeavoured to make him handsome. The characteristic nose points downwards with the same melancholy effect as in the picture of Pietro Facchetti in the Vatican Library. All the lines in this face run downwards: the real type of a man who has known a struggle for life and worked with tireless energy under high pressure in the busiest of all pontifical reigns. His features are not more cheerful than the style of architecture of Sixtine Rome. He looks old, as his architecture must look to later generations. The inscription around the portrait tells us that this man, born in Mili in the diocese of Como, architect to His Holiness, is only forty-six years of age.

The portrait has been arranged like a picture in the frame of a large window in Barocco style. Italy led the world in this kind of title-page until late in the XVII<sup>th</sup> century. The best artists were called upon to design similar pages in the form of windows and gates peopled with allegorical figures and a happy crowd of playing Cupids with coats of arms and festoons of tools and instruments. Fine examples can be seen in the Plantin-Muretus Museum of Antwerp—drawings of Rubens—and

amongst the works of the best engravers, who drew their own designs for plates.

In the frontispiece of Fontana's book even the young genii look pensive as they hold the ends of the heavy festoons arrayed over an architect's desk, ending, merely for the sake of that period's style, in a bunch of fruit. The coats of arms on the top belong to Sixtus V, without excepting his period as Cardinal, and the very new ones to Fontana himself, with the tools, fountains, and obelisk.

The inscriptions are chosen carefully and placed just where they belong.

“A monument of his religious munificence dedicated to our very Holy Lord Sixtus V, Supreme Pontiff.”

“Concerning the transference of the obelisk of the Vatican, and the works of our Lord Sixtus V, the first book.”

The last line tells that Nic. Sebenico of Dalmatia engraved the plate in Rome in 1589, having obtained the copyright from the Pope; so the stated age of Fontana, forty-six years, stands for 1589. We also know at once that, when publishing this book, he intended to continue with a second volume . . . little thinking under which circumstances he would do so: in exile, many years later, almost in self-defence!

The title is extremely simple on the print. Here it is only a repetition of the first page of



the book, where almost the same wording fills the whole surface of the folio, imitating an old inscription with royal characters of the Sixtine era.

Before entering into the material of this book, I should like to say something more about its real scope. In the works of former centuries we often have to seek for their substantial meaning. The language of letters, documents, chronicles, privileges, is somewhat pompous, and overcharged with curls and twists, covered with flowers—amongst which many are withered—and profusely flavoured. We certainly do almost the same, but not quite to such an extent. Those of us who are now writing what will be documents in centuries to come will not offer to the world so many puzzles.

In handling old books it is well to investigate the reasonable existence of every detail. The best method to begin with is to take nothing for granted; I mean by that, not to take the old book as a ready purchase, but to discover how and by which means it became such a book. The choice of paper, of type, the composition of the pages, will then strike us at once. Not chance, but experience and continuous thought have guided the book to its æsthetic form. Already, in the first century of the invention of typography, we may surmise that the relations between author and typographer-publisher were of some value in the final production of the volume. A few instances in the



XVI<sup>th</sup> century prove the truth of this supposition. It has been told that Erasmus personally watched the composing of one of his works in a printing office in Venice.

In the Antwerp Museum we find, with its corrections, the printed proof page executed by the experts employed by Plantin for that purpose. To adhere strictly to the time of Sixtus V, we have a testimony in the correspondence of Girolamo Catena. In one of his letters he indicates to his printer the use of a special type for Latin quotations. Another example is in Rocca's book about the Vatican Library (published 1591). At the end he asks forgiveness for mistakes, as it was a very hot season when his work was printed and the printing office rather distant from where he lived.

When we have thought over the circumstances accompanying the production of a book they seem most natural. There were some more complicated peculiarities which are now out of use or dying out. Old books frequently open with quite a collection of poetry written by friends or protectors of the author. It seems impossible that these poetical and favourable criticisms could be printed in the very first edition together with the book to which they appertain. Clever historians have seen that the authors, in those cases, had to send the manuscript around to their friends. They read it, penned an appropriate poem, and returned

the future book and their metrical statement together. After the manuscript had passed around and gained a conspicuous crown of laurels, the whole was sent to the printer, and it is supposed that this scheme did not only aim at advertisement, but acted as a sort of balm against sharp opinions. The author flattered severe critics by sending them his manuscript, suggesting that he would not dare print it before he had their sanction with the unspoken condition that he also would be indulgent when his turn came to pass judgment. . . . This custom has died out. At least, in our days, critics do not write poetical sentences. . . .

The habit of dedicating books was in former times much more general than it is now. Feelings of gratitude, love, and admiration certainly often caused the hand of an author to tremble with emotion at a memorable moment. But such noble sentiments are not always to be considered as his real motives. Here the curly style complicates the situation; still, it does not cover everything, as we know from counter-proofs in simple figures. For instance, the author dedicates his book to the Governor of his own, or even of a foreign city, who accepts the homage and orders the city clerk to note how many golden ducats he has paid for this tribute of veneration!

Publishers of engravings did the same, as Padre Ehrle has discovered and related in his book about

a Roman map of 1577. He found out that their copper-plates were kept in stock, and their each proof, by means of a simple erasure, was dedicated to a different nobleman. They followed the politics of the day, and were ready with their article as soon as the new sovereign stepped into his official position, though they had already dedicated the same MS. or print to his predecessor.

In Sixtus V's book of accounts I found on nearly every page the name of Fontana, with large sums behind it. His name and expenditures were coupled later—to his disadvantage. The cashier jotted down the expenses for the famous safe in Castel Sant' Angelo and the cost of the knight's new chain; but nothing is entered concerning Fontana's book, or a present in return for it. So that if this is not an omission, or an aggravation of Sixtus' parsimony in the later years of his life, we would be inclined to accept the dedication of the book by Fontana to his pontifical master as perfectly sincere and disinterested.

At the same time, the volume grows in our esteem, beyond its folio size, and the author, with his obelisk in his hands, rises behind his desk as an upright man in the zenith of his career, who, from his natural pulpit, lectures about the works "the fame of which has filled the world" to "those who, on account of being far (from Rome), cannot admire their majesty." The glory of it all returns to the Pope, as is stated by the dedication in courtly

phrase, "As the waters come from the sea and go back to it."

Every allowance being made, the book of Fontana appears to us as a genuine treatise about a very distinct style of architecture and a preponderant feature in the appearance of Rome after the Renaissance.

He no doubt offered a copy to Sixtus—if the Pope did not die before the book came out, of which I am not sure—and presented the Cardinals with others, thus facing from the outset a tribunal of intelligent judges. Among the Cardinals there must have been several who looked upon him as a parvenu. They had to handle him with the same delicacy that restrained the expression of their opinions when they had similar thoughts about his papal master. The activity of Fontana, compressed in the short lapse of five years, had attracted general attention, and each prelate must have encountered this laborious man with his armies of workmen, pulling down buildings and at the same time hastily constructing others in many parts of Rome. He certainly often met with resistance when putting his hands to venerable antiquities in order to replace them by modern palaces which, however, soon showed age through the dry and severe character of his own style. The Chapter of St. John in Lateran cannot have approved of the destruction of the old mansions of the Popes round the basilica. He must have bred much silent



enmity in the hearts of those who loved Rome as it was before Sixtus V.

At all times the clergy is naturally inclined to love the Middle Ages as the epoch in which the Catholic Church existed without competition and freely impregnated art with religion. The definition of Art as "a religion or a luxury," although paradoxical and formulated from the mediævalist's standpoint, is valuable as distinguishing between mediæval art and the Renaissance. Though I cannot adduce any contemporary proof of it, I take it for granted that, even as late in the XVI<sup>th</sup> century as Sixtus' reign, the art of the Middle Ages was still regretted by the most cultured clergy. Such a proof might be a lament in pamphlet form by a learned and art-loving priest. Then it would at the same time be a warning not to consider History from a hasty criterion, and also to reckon, with the important element in society called Conservatism.

Fontana was a man of enterprise, and, as such, he was victorious over the Conservatives, who often have more culture and less activity. We see this intellectual and artistic struggle between the successful bourgeoisie and the indolent aristocracy from Fontana's point of view only. The others did not write down their wounded feelings and offended taste.

However, this enterprising man of the XVI<sup>th</sup> century lacked the variety in architectural design



possessed by Bernini his successor in the following century. The severity, stiffness, and poverty of imagination in Fontana's style may partly be ascribed to Sixtus V and explained as the soberness of a monk, and partly to the very strong Spanish influence brought into Italy by the Courts in the second half of the Cinquecento (compare Bronzino's portrait of Cosimo de' Medici's wife with his designs for tapestry, lately published in the *Bollettino d'Arte*). But even then an artist with a touch of divine grace might have come out of the tournament with triumphant charm and striking lines of composition.

The ways to success are manifold. Fontana reached his goal by the secondary qualities which imbued the artists of the Renaissance: steadfastness and diplomacy. Sixtus V kept a small Court, Fontana was a courtier in the larger Court which was Rome beyond the walls of the Vatican. The Pope required a man of his calibre to complete his numerous public works, and Fontana's diplomacy safeguarded him against contrary influences. He could have written one of the many manuals on "how to hold your place in Court," of which Castiglione's *Cortigiano* is the classical type. He left us some precious written memoirs of his knowledge of men's hearts in his narrative of the erection of the obelisk—a monument to his own career. The story is told with perfect candour in simple and strong language, and is it-

self the best chapter in the biography of a self-made man.

Fontana appears in its clear daylight as a much more attractive figure than we should have supposed from his features and from the gloom of many of his architectural masterpieces. This man of reason ought to have lived in the age of steel and concrete, and enjoyed the preference given to intelligence and system rather than to the ingenious inspiration of the moment . . . such is our twentieth-century conclusion after reading his report.

Haste pervades the pontificate of Sixtus V. No matter if the impulse meets with such an unwieldy and obstinate impediment as an obelisk, or if it decrees that the dome of Michelangelo must be spanned over the crossing of the naves of St. Peter's. Money, material, engineers, and a legion of workmen are ready to bring the Pope's commands into solid reality. Not only haste, but exuberant force leads the actions of Sixtus. He attempts the most difficult tasks at the same time ; reaches, at the very beginning of his reign, the limits of the possible gauged after the technical means of his times by the placing of the obelisk before St. Peter's. To the church he will give before the end of his reign its most essential ornament : its dome.

Quickly and strenuously the Pontiff started with his obelisk.

Four months after the day of his election, a Committee of Cardinals, of Prelates, and engineers was called together. At that moment the obelisk, leaning slightly on one side, surmounted by a sphere, was standing deep in the earth where it had been planted in the former circus, near the vestry of St. Peter's. The proposition must have seemed somewhat fanciful to the "Committee of very intelligent men," as Fontana calls them without a shadow of irony. The majority of them realised that it implied a responsibility beyond their ken. This Fontana knew already. He enumerates "the extraordinary weight and size of the stone," "the danger of breaking this valuable single remnant of Roman times left upright, the experience of other Popes and other engineers, who had abandoned the task even before they had undertaken it, and the discouraging fact that no record was left describing ancient methods for lifting and carrying the monolith." (I do not know where Ranke found the information that Fontana used the description of the erection of an obelisk by Ammianus Marcellinus. Fontana's own words seem to exclude his knowledge of any reliable description.)

We can imagine the judges meeting in the palace of Cardinal Cesi: four Cardinals, one of them the future Grand Duke of Tuscany, Ferdinando de' Medici, several prelates, some representatives of the Roman population, Masters of

the Streets, Commissioners of the “Fontana di Trevi.” Those were the technical advisers. The assembly discussed with the earnestness habitual to Committees, whilst the impatient Honorary President, waiting in a corridor of the Vatican, stood pondering about a new wing for the Court of San Damaso facing the stately obelisk. They must have felt all the weight of the stone on their weary shoulders !

The course of their actions shows that Committees have been Committees at least since the beginning of the pontificate of Sixtus the Fifth. They naturally did what the Italians picturesquely call *scarica barile* (placing barrels on the shoulders of others). Fontana, who evidently followed the meetings and the resolutions passed, recounts it unconsciously. As they were unable to agree, they decided to call in the advice of all the literary men, mathematicians, architects, and engineers that they could find. The moment was propitious. The beginning of a pontificate always brought many people of real talent, and others of more dubious merit, to the capital. The effect surpassed all expectations. Within twenty-five days a crowd of five hundred candidates had collected. Fontana gives us the following details : “On the eighteenth of September, about five hundred men belonging to the above-mentioned professions, arrived from different towns ; some came from Milan, others from Venice, a few from Florence,



Lucca, Como, Sicily, and even from Rhodes and Greece; amongst them being some monks. Each of them brought his own invention, in design, in a model, or merely in writing, while another described his in a speech. . . .”

Fontana presents to the readers of his book (written several years after the successful transfer of the obelisk) a cartoon representing the most fantastical propositions from the five hundred. Without going into any ironical comment, he leaves his readers to judge with their own eyes, reasoning that it is much easier to invent little models, than to adapt them for the actual erection of an obelisk. His own model is carried up to the sky (on the cartoon), in a kind of apotheosis, by two cherubs, and the unfinished St. Peter's is seen in the higher regions, waiting for its dome. Beneath, between the remaining old structure and the doomed vestry of the basilica—the mediæval St. Mary of Fevers—his competitors are shown, boastfully playing with their tiny machines, architects of castles in Spain! Only one man in the group besides Fontana realises the difficulty as he gazes upwards at the imposing height of the obelisk itself!

In after years, when Fontana's name was known as that of the man who transferred the obelisk, he had no reason to entertain contempt for his unsuccessful competitors. If he had written his book when controversy was at its height, his







account would have been more impassioned. Time, as it went on, soothed the personal irritation which this calm, intelligent man must have suffered, when it was affirmed by pedantic, modest, clear-headed, or wildly fantastic men amongst the five hundred that the obelisk could never be lowered into a horizontal position! The most daring only ventured to propose that it be carried in an inclined position, *a mezz'aria*.

It was probably towards the end of the discussion, in the midst of a competitive demonstration as to how the obelisk should be moved by means of vices, levers, a dented wheel, etc., that Fontana stepped quietly forward and astonished the assembly with a neat little wooden model of a scaffolding provided with pulleys and cords. A miniature obelisk, made of lead, obediently answering the architect's intentions, was safely lowered and laid on the ground, ready to be carried horizontally in its full length to any given place. The inventor explained each movement, giving his reasons and arguing the subject in every detail.

The assembly met again, and, after protracted discussions, they declared that Fontana's invention was by far the most practical, and should be accepted. This part of the Committee's task was fulfilled fairly, and, in theory, the obelisk was already on its new site.

But, at this moment, the members of the assembly became oppressed by a sense of respon-

sibility. Was this clever inventor, once a mason-boy, with his pretty machine and free speech, the person to whom they should entrust such a delicate charge? One word more and this enterprising man would be raising skywards the full-size replica of his model, and beginning to lift the real obelisk! Their eyes wandered towards the small leaden toy. They saw in their imagination the real object, a million times heavier, hanging *a mezz'aria* (in mid-air), its full weight pulling on the ropes. A terrible crash, the *castello* (scaffolding) falling to the ground, the workmen flying in fright. A sound of thunder . . . the obelisk in pieces! . . . A messenger hastening to the Vatican, to that impatient Pontiff, Sixtus V . . . Here their overwrought fancy stopped. They looked at Fontana and wondered to see his head still upon his shoulders; how could he keep calm in such a disaster? That man? Never! An excuse, ready found . . . too young. Only forty-two.

The blow must have seemed hard to Fontana. He says that he was glad that an old colleague—sixty-five years of age—Bartolommeo Ammanati, with the help of Giacomo della Porta, should be entrusted with all the responsibility of executing his own plan. We refuse to accept his statement, probably fabricated to cover his disappointment. For he must have felt the decision of the Committee to be a serious check in his promising career.



He only waited for an opportunity to show that he understood the policy of the frightened dignitaries and technical men, trying to subdivide the responsibility. Strong in his convictions, he must have resented their lack of faith in his skill.

The strategies of the Committee saved the position in Fontana's favour, for the tactics of tardiness continued after the defeat. The newcomers accepted the invention with much diffidence. And Sixtus nearly had to wait!

Fontana, beaten by delay, counted on the impatience of his supreme master. He awaited the explosion, keeping away from the Pope for seven days. Then he called, with some excuse, at the palace of Monte Cavallo. Soon the Pope himself brought the conversation to the desired point. Fontana said that "he thought that everything would go all right. He was only afraid that, in the execution of his plans by others, something might happen, through their fault, and that he would be charged with their failure. It would be explained as a fault of his model. That made him thoughtful. It did not seem just to him. Nobody else could do his work so well as he himself. . . . "

At once Fontana reached his heart's desire. He had calculated rightly. In all his modesty he stood before a master whose bitter days he had shared, who, however stern, held high his interpretation of justice. Sixtus V, impulsive in his



decisions, tenacious in their execution, saw his faithful Fontana disappointed, crushed, wronged, by the Committee's lack of energy; neither had he had any report of a beginning made by the others; an injustice was done, a public work waiting, two sins committed under his eyes. With a characteristic gesture, he gave up all his consideration for the Committee and for the age of Bartolommeo Ammanati. Already Ammanati, though sent by the Grand Duke of Tuscany, had been ordered away with harsh words by Sixtus, when he had asked for a whole year for the work. In an incredibly short time Fontana was walking towards St. Peter's Square, in full charge of the work, accompanied by fifty men ready to open the ground for the obelisk's foundation. On the spot itself he only found one pole, planted by Ammanati and Giacomo della Porta. Fontana mentions this detail, again without irony.

This incident took place on the 26th of September, and the date appears in a very significant way in the accounts of Sixtus V, which I consulted in the Vatican Archives. On the same day Giacomo della Porta was paid for his work of uncovering the obelisk—"by order of the Pope on the said day." Sixtus V settled the whole question on the 25th of September, again on a Wednesday.

We know from documents published by Bertolotti that, on the 29th of September, Sixtus V signed a preliminary cheque of 3000 scudi for the

architect Fontana “to buy wood, cables, and other things necessary” for the transfer of the monument. Fontana’s estimate was 16,000 scudi for the whole work. His next competitor was a colleague, who offered to do it for 13,500 scudi. This is not mentioned in Fontana’s book, but in Bertolotti’s.

Soon afterwards Fontana received a papal “privilege,” calculated to be of the greatest assistance to him and to facilitate his task in every way. Proud of the privilege, valid in the Ecclesiastical States, he prints a copy of it in his book. It embraced indeed all the resources of the whole territory dependent on the Holy See. With the authority of his privilege he could force every workman of the highest or lowest class to come to his aid with craft and tools, but paying him his due wages. He had the right to claim all the wood useful for his purpose, paying the price established by two arbiters; to cut down all the timber he wanted from the possessions of the cathedral and Chapter of St. Peter’s, of S. Spirito in Sassia, and of the Apostolic Chamber, and freely to use their grounds to feed and support the cattle required for the work. He could take all the food for his workmen in Rome; he could bring anything into the city without paying taxes, call to his service all persons belonging to the *fabbrica* of St. Peter’s, clear the space round the obelisk, and pull down any house he wanted out of his way, on

condition that he first stated the amount to be paid.

In this singular document the absence of pressure on the labour market and the accuracy of the financial side of the question were certainly fixed with the approval of Domenico Fontana himself. It also gives us an insight into the industrial resources of Italy in those days.

Rome had to make the heavy cables of hemp brought from Foligno by a man sent there by order of Fontana. From Ronciglione and Subiaco he ordered the bars and all the minor iron implements. A large gang of workmen went to the woods of Campomorto, near Nettuno, to cut the oak, which was brought to Rome on very large two-wheeled carts, each drawn by seven pairs of oxen.

If a certain Guido Baldo Foglietta saw this procession on the pavement of Rome, he must have been alarmed. This man made—during the reign of Sixtus V—a special study of the action of wheels on pavement. In the Roman Historical Society's *Review* Count Balzani, who has written in English the latest biography of Sixtus V, published an interesting little treatise on the subject. It proves how carefully Italians have observed mechanical questions, and, as such, deserves a moment's consideration between Fontana's greater wonders.

Foglietta says that the worst damage to a pavement is caused by a wheel with a narrow band

composed of different pieces of iron attached by protruding nails. These wheels tear it, cut it up, and carry it away. Therefore he proposes the general use of wheels with opposite qualities, considering that the streets of Rome are "all on ruins and often opened up to make sewers and aqueducts" (this last observation suits the Sixtine times well!). The cleanliness of the streets is also amongst his pious wishes: therefore, nobody should be allowed to throw refuse into public highways. Special carts, which he plans in detail, should go round to gather it up.

We know something more about the city's cleanliness under Sixtus V. A Roman specialist, called Cerasoli, has written an article on the streets of Rome in general at that period. The *nettezza* was entrusted to private individuals. Each of them received twelve cents every week from every shopkeeper who had a frontage. He quotes another payment of the year 1483: one florin a month to the sweeper who had to clean the street from Castel Sant' Angelo to the Vatican Palace. The new pavement of the city under Sixtus V was made between January and July, 1587. It cost 5000 scudi. The streets were then paved with stone, in spite of the belief of the Romans that this kind of pavement was unhealthy. In 1588 several roads were paved with bricks, 121 altogether, divided over different *Rioni* (Wards of Rome).



One of the reports, published for the first time in the article, gives a list of the names of streets, mentioning also some palaces of the time, and is of importance for the topography of Rome.

The territory of Terracina provided a great quantity of wooden boards for covering the obelisk and for its bed. The central axes for the windlasses were cut in a place belonging to the Camera Apostolica. Everywhere the work was started at once, almost on the same day.

Fontana, from a mere inventor, regarded with suspicion by the cautious Committee, had become, by a papal *motu-proprio*, the man of the moment.

His activity was given a heavy task. How interesting it would have been if his correspondence had been saved ! The unhappy later period of his career must be made responsible for the loss of his papers.

Men in his position in Italy kept their books and correspondence very well, and an important part of Fontana's book-keeping is preserved. Debt and credit, letters received and sent, diaries, copies of reports, were part of their daily occupation. Their punctuality and regularity make the study of Italian history specially interesting to us. In the case of Fontana, we may suppose that he sat in his office many late nights in order to keep in touch with his staff of collaborators and providers.

He himself tells us about his day's work.



In the first place, he studied his obelisk over and over again. It was partly buried under ground, by the effect of time, in a distant, muddy place, so little frequented by people that strangers who came to Rome out of devotion or curiosity, if they were not brought there by somebody who knew the way, would not find the obelisk, and would even depart without seeing it.

Fontana was to change that state of things. The half-lost obelisk would be for all time on the most frequented square in Rome. Only the delay of centuries was still between those two extremes, and his intelligence and skill had to indicate an absolutely safe way of bringing the monolith from the Circus to the square.

Method won the game, from the start to the successful finish.

First of all he made himself a clear idea of the material weight of the task. Using forty windlasses, and moving them by the power of men and horses in strict discipline, he counted upon an abundant overweight. He reasoned out every possible danger and difficulty, and prepared against each of them sufficiently. Still his colleagues doubted whether he would succeed in harmonising the forces. Fontana, however, trusted himself fully, on account of his experience in that kind of work and of the order he would keep in its execution. The figure of Concordia on one of the illustrations of his book expresses this principle.

Around and above the obelisk, the *castello* was built, a solid temporary tower made of heavy wood, cables, and iron, capable of carrying, if necessary, the entire weight of the block.

The *castello* was constructed of such strength that it could have carried a whole house, as the inventor proudly affirms, as easily as if it had been made of solid stone or a mass of compact brick. Five windlasses should lift the obelisk under the basis. Three of those had to pass inside the vestry of St. Peter's. As the foot of the obelisk also had to slide into this building, Fontana made an opening in the side wall, and the grave of Alexander VI was disturbed for this purpose. The space was small, nevertheless, and it required much care to place the forty windlasses, as shown in the print with the *Concordia*. Fontana took measures to avoid an extreme strain on the *castello*, by instructing a gang of workmen to place wedges under the base of the obelisk as soon as it was lifted up and to continue doing so gradually.

From the roof of the vestry, a bridge went to the summit of the *castello* for the convenience of the workmen. There, on the top, every pulley was numbered, to render it easy for the overseers to indicate where a cable was drawn too tight. A stroke on a bell, also placed there, would mean halt !

The start was to be signalled by a trumpeter stationed on an elevation of the ground below.

Each windlass was tested until men and horses worked in the desired harmony or Concordia.

The obelisk itself was covered with a coating of mats and thick boards and clasped around with iron bars and cables, to ensure its safety and the integrity of its smooth surface. Some days before its elevation the sphere on the top was taken off. Fontana convinced himself that the popular belief that this sphere contained the ashes of Cæsar was a mere fable, as it was cast in one piece, and, originally, no hole allowed for the introduction of any other material. The surface presents several apertures—(the sphere is now in the Capitoline Museum)—but those were made by bullets during the siege of Rome (1527). (At least, that is how Fontana explains their presence.)

Some dust had been carried into the openings by the wind. Fontana kept note of all these details; no modern archæologist could surpass him on that point!

As the great day came nearer, the last preparations were made. The architect-engineer still had to count with one disturbing factor—the curious and noisy public, which would gather for the occasion. Cries of joy or anger would disturb the Concordia, and incalculable disaster would happen, in case of an accident, to the crowds rushing towards the “castello.” In order to eliminate the possibility of such a catastrophe, Fontana only

had to speak and a "bando" went out, as severe an edict as ever restrained an excitable throng. On the all-important day of erection the streets leading to the square were to be closed and the space surrounded with fences. Death sentences were to be meted out to any who dared to overstep those limits, and heavy punishments would fall on those who, by any noise, would hinder the workmen or the command of Fontana. The police was admitted into the enclosure to give quick execution to the "bando." This might mean much, but it is hardly to be credited that the gallows were erected inside the enclosure, as the legend afterwards related.

"Very great silence was kept," says Fontana, "for [fear of] the punishments of the Bando and because of the novelty of the work." This last observation on what we call "the psychology of crowds" is fine; extreme astonishment can cause silence.

On the 30th April, 1586, two hours before sunrise, again a Wednesday, mass was heard by all those who were to take part in the great event fixed for that day. Then all entered the enclosure, where, besides the hands necessary to move the engine, Fontana held a great number of labourers in readiness. In one corner twenty men stood with twenty fresh horses, to change if necessary, while eight or ten inspectors walked around the whole field of operations in order to avoid



disorder. A company of twenty men stood at the gate of the store-room housing duplicate pieces of all the minor instruments, cords, pulleys, etc. Each windlass was worked by two *capomaestri* (head-masters). Under the scaffolding stood twelve carpenters to place the wedges. They wore iron helmets to protect their heads in case some piece should fall. On the scaffolding he placed thirty men; forty at the three levers on one side; and, at the two levers on the other, eighteen men with a small windlass.

In the meantime, a splendid spring day had dawned and an imposing public gathered. Amongst the honoured guests were the family of Montalto, the Duchess of Bracciano (formerly Vittoria Accorambona), the Duchess of Paliano, the Ambassadors, and the aristocracy of Rome, with a conspicuous number of “forestieri” from all parts of Italy. The windows and roofs of St. Peter’s and other churches in the neighbourhood were literally crowded. In the streets there was such an extraordinary mass that the Swiss Guard and light cavalry had to guard the fences in order to avert disturbance.

“When everything was prepared and ready in this way,” says Fontana, “I ordered everybody to execute the given orders when the sound of the trumpet should be heard. I asked all the workmen and all the people around, seeing that this work was done for the glory of God, that they



should kindly kneel with me and say a short prayer, in order that His Divine Majesty should favour our enterprise, our own strength being too feeble to reach such great results without His special help. So after a Pater Noster and an Ave Maria, sung by all, I gave the signal to the trumpeter. When the sound burst forth, the aforesaid five levers and forty windlasses, manned by nine hundred and seven men and seventy-five horses, began their task. It seemed as if the earth trembled at this first movement. The scaffolding groaned loudly as all the woodwork shrunk together under the weight. The obelisk, which (as we knew when we used the lead) hung over two feet towards the choir of St. Peter's, where mass is now recited, raised itself straight. Notwithstanding the great noise, no harm had come to the scaffolding. Everybody breathed. A sound from the bell arrested the movement. . . ."

It was only a slight repair which had to be made to the iron bands around the obelisk, which in general offered much less resistance than the cables. In twelve movements the obelisk was raised by a few inches. The old blocks were taken away, the wedges secured, and the obelisk, with its frame, left in that position after a day's work. A couple of mortars gave the sign to the Castel Sant' Angelo, where all the artillery was fired in sign of rejoicing. The workmen had their dinner during the day, as an old print shows us. The old

blocks were four in number ; two were loose and two pivoted about six inches inside the obelisk. One of the loose ones was brought at once to the Pope.

These blocks gave the successful remover of the obelisk a great deal to do and a great deal to think about. In the course of his researches he had in vain sought the means whereby the ancients had erected the obelisk. In Fontana's day the classical times still were the principal source of knowledge, especially for matters of an architectural character. He probably had fewer technical means at his disposal than they possessed. Any hint would have been precious, written accounts were lacking, and though Fontana's own part was done, he still continued to seek for any information that could be obtained from facts. The four blocks suggested a few ideas, but it took four days to pull them out of the stone, which had to be cut all round them. The result of his research must have satisfied him, for he came to the conclusion that he had done much better than the old Romans. To surpass antiquity was a dream of the Renaissance. We will leave Domenico's illusion undiscussed !

He deduces a few facts about the Roman history of the obelisk from the state in which he found it. He supposes that it must have been lying on one side for a long time before being put into its place. The base was rough, as well as three

sides. The smooth side may have been lying protected against the earth, whilst all the others were exposed to the wind. Besides, he agrees with Plinius that the obelisk had been broken. Fontana believed that the upper part was shortened to disguise its rupture. How much may be historical truth and how much excessive imagination we cannot pretend to judge. To us the obelisk represents three centuries more of mystery, and we must accept such monuments without question.

A week later, again on a Wednesday, the obelisk was lowered to its "bed." The rolling movement of the "bed" under the base had to be counteracted by a special windlass as soon as the point came over half the downward distance. This is not represented on the print. On the other hand, we are inclined to believe that the designer or engraver took some poetical licence when he drew a man standing on the point, while the obelisk described a peculiar and perilous line through space.

Even in this work no accident occurred. The scaffolding had done the first part of its duty in a very satisfactory way, and had induced a general certainty that it would also stand the resurrection of the slain colossus of pagan origin, who must have felt uncomfortable in the vestry of St. Peter's, where the operation had deposited a part of its base. The hero of the day, Domenico Fontana, received a public ovation, and was

brought home with drums and trumpets like a victor in less peaceful struggles.

The next work was to take down the scaffolding and to send its different sections to St. Peter's Square to be rebuilt. The obelisk had first been moved out of the way for fear that pieces of wood might fall down and damage it. As soon as the place was cleared, Fontana commenced his search for the root of the obelisk, composed of several blocks, all used in the reconstruction in the same order as he had found them. He says that he had never seen blocks of such large dimensions in Rome. Part of the basement was joined together with iron clamps covered with lead. They had been exposed for centuries to the action of the subterranean waters, but the leaden cover had protected them perfectly against corroding influences. Under the basement Fontana found a floor of travertine, and under this a foundation of stones, which he did not extract, as they were very deep and surrounded by water.

On St. Peter's Square the base was placed on a deep foundation. Between its different parts medals were placed representing Pius the Vth, by order of his constant admirer, Sixtus. The four ancient blocks returned to their former place. Then the whole base was covered with earth, so as to form a little mountain, on which the "castello" arose again. The top of the mountain was connected by a dyke with the place



where the obelisk originally stood, and so everything was prepared for the great day of its erection.

On the 10th of September, 1586—again a Wednesday, just to aid fate!—the whole day was spent in executing a series of movements exactly the reverse of the operation of lifting and lowering the obelisk. Again an enormous audience was present, many remaining without lunch to watch the grandiose spectacle. On this day may have happened the famous story of the seaman, who—against severe orders of silence—is said to have cried: “Acqua alle corde!” The story runs that the obelisk was in danger, the cables being about to break. The seaman could not restrain himself from shouting out his very practical advice, and “Water on the cables” proved the salvation of the monolith. The family of this man who thus saved the obelisk, as well as his own neck—called Bresca—are supposed to have obtained the right to send the palms for Palm-Sunday to St. Peter’s from San Remo.

The elements of the story are very natural: the threatened punishment, the loyal seaman acquainted through his calling with the dangers of cables; and the clemency of the Pope, when his precious obelisk was saved. Still there are many reasons to doubt the authenticity of the tale. It should rightly be placed under the broad heading: Roman Folklore; we also learn from it inciden-



tally, that already at that time, Rome was supplied with more or less exotic plants from the luxuriant Riviera. The fact that Fontana has not mentioned the incident does not disprove its truth, for it would not have looked well in his somewhat self-satisfied account. But this reason does not explain the silence of contemporary reporters. I have not found it mentioned in the numerous contemporary accounts of the erection; even the *Avvisi* say nothing of the incident. It is difficult to account for this general silence, for the keen journalists of the time would never have allowed such an exciting item to be passed over. Special researches may bring more light on the story and discover the time in which it had its origin. I suppose that it will be found to date from a period after the death of Fontana and of all the eye-witnesses of his feat, were they landsmen or loitering sailors.

The literature on the obelisk's erection is international enough. The book in which Petrus Galesinus collected elucubrations for this occasion called *Obeliscus Vaticanus*, printed in Rome in 1588, contains, for instance, a letter written to Spain about the triumph of Fontana, and poems by Polish, German, English, Belgian, and French admirers, mostly students in their respective national colleges in Rome in the year 1584—they all bring in the Nile, Cleopatra, crocodiles, and other Egyptian symbols belonging to the

former surroundings of that other stranger. . . . One poem is even printed in the form of an obelisk. Last but not least, we find verses from Tasso, who has also sung another work of Sixtus in his "Stanze" on the Acqua Felice.

Sixtus V was not present at this inspiring ceremony. He expected that everybody would do his duty; such a command was sufficient to bring the obelisk to its place! This fact, hatched in the alembic of folklore, has turned into a tale of striking colours. Popular fancy was not satisfied with that calculated indifference. Already in the first months of the pontificate, when public opinion about every new Pope becomes formed, Sixtus had shown enough of his unbending severity for each one of his actions to be judged after a determined scheme. The people naturally invented the story that Fontana was now indeed risking his head, as the members of the Committee had at first feared. It intensified the interest, and made of the operations of pulleys and cables and windlasses a scenic performance which might end like a real tragedy.

The master simply expected his loyal servant to do his work. While Friend Fontana was raising an obelisk which had eluded all the architects of the Renaissance, Michelangelo included, the Pope was engrossed in his own work—politics. The French Ambassador had reached Rome, and

entered by the Porta Angelica straight into St. Peter's Square. The Pope moved from the Quirinal to the Vatican to receive him, and, as he was passing along the city street called Banchi, the thunder of the artillery of Castel St. Angelo warned him that Fontana had fulfilled his expectations. The French Ambassador, who stared at the important work, had time to ponder on the power of this Pope. Sixtus himself could not restrain his emotion on this memorable occasion.

The French Ambassador, according to an anonymous chronicle of the time, expressed the opinion that Sixtus was bringing Rome once again to its former majesty. This opinion is expressed in another way by contemporary and later writers, who said that Sixtus V tried to compete with the Cæsars, and shared their vanity in putting his name in evidence on all his monuments.

The name of Sixtus V still strikes every visitor to Rome ; but we find reasons in abundance to refute the similitude with imperial taste, for the whole life of Sixtus V and his pontificate, even more than his earlier biography, show a stern religious feeling. This anti-pagan feeling will be seen more especially in the following chapter ; perhaps the raising of this obelisk should have been reserved for that. But even keeping to the events, the proofs speak for themselves. From the Vatican standpoint, the raising of the obelisk was only the arrangement of a pedestal on which to place the

image of the cross. As such, the whole successful, though difficult, operation appears in the regular accounts of the Diary of the Master of Ceremonies.

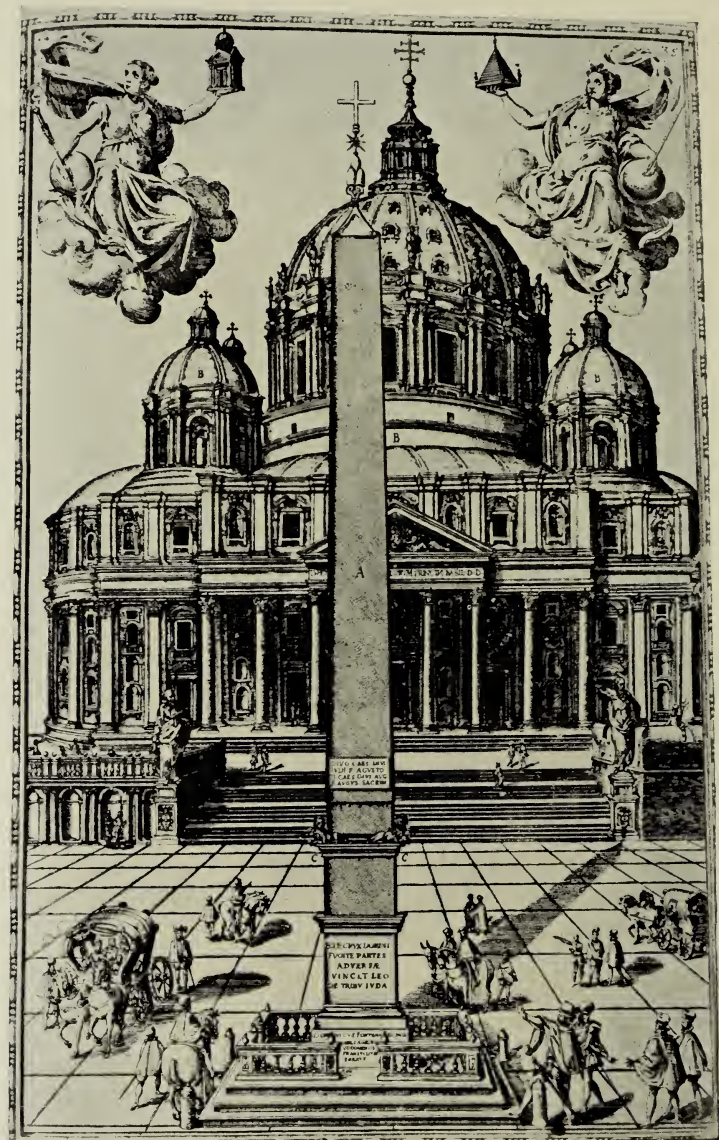
Later he was to have the opportunity of speaking of an even greater sanctification of pagan monuments, when the statues of Peter and Paul were placed on the columns of Marcus Aurelius and of Trajan !

Another proof is in the book of Fontana himself. When the pedestal was finished on the 27th September, he not only reserved a place for the clergy on the square, but also recounted the services in his book. He quotes the verses recited on the occasion, all referring to the Cross. The obelisk was exorcised by a bishop, and, at the end of the rites, the cross, containing a relic, was hoisted to the top while the Swiss Guards fired their arquebuses.

The cross at present on the top of the obelisk is not the one which was placed there with the ceremony tersely described by Fontana, and treated at length also by Pietro Galesino. It became so weatherbeaten that it had to be changed during the first half of the eighteenth century. Venuti tells us in his book on papal coins (*Numismata Pontificum*) that an ordinary workman found a very ingenious way to reach the top of the obelisk for that purpose, described in a book by a certain Lælius Cosaltus, published in 1743, to which I have already referred.







A LEAF FROM FONTANA'S BOOK.

A monument of such importance as the obelisk together with the detailed recital of Fontana have excited the curiosity of many writers after him. The art historian and archæologist Bellori—who published, in 1672, a book of the lives of the most important artists of the century ending with that year—makes some clever observations on the subject. He says that, in the end, the system applied by Fontana was the same as that used by the Ancients, which could be proved by a drawing from a bas-relief in the square of Constantinople (this last indication is rather vague!). Ranke, and even his latest editors, believe that Fontana knew the description given by Ammianus Marcellinus of the raising of an obelisk.

According to Bellori, the four bronze lions—modelled by the unfortunate Prospero Bresciano, as Baglione already states in his *Lives* of the artists—do not really carry the obelisk, though they seem to do so. The lions with the stars are, of course, taken from the coat of arms of Sixtus, and placed there for æsthetic reasons; the weight is carried by the old blocks which they conceal.

Bellori is much troubled by the fact that the obelisk does not occupy the right centre of the portico constructed under Alexander VII, and is not on the surface determined by a perpendicular line from the cross of the dome of St. Peter's and the middle of the façade. The obelisk stands distinctly to the north of this imaginary surface,

yet nobody who comes into St. Peter's Square will observe that the obelisk is placed nearer to the right-hand portico. Bellori wonders that three such expert architects as Bartolommeo Ammanati, Giacomo della Porta, and Fontana could pass over this mistake. The pole which Fontana found on the square is to blame for this. It was not easy to measure for a façade which was to come in the next century, and a cross for which the whole dome had still to be built.

This little difference was only observed later. Sixtus V was perfectly satisfied with what had been accomplished. He wrote to inform the foreign powers, had medals struck, ordered the raising of the obelisk to be recorded in official chronicles, received congratulations from many countries, gave special indulgence to devotees who should pass the cross, and made his Domenico a Roman noble with golden spurs !

The news quickly spread over Italy through the reports of political agents to the Italian rulers represented in Rome. It must have been the topic of the day in the neighbouring cities: for instance, in Florence, as we see by the interesting diary of that city, treasured by Agostino Lapini in the second half of the XVI<sup>th</sup> century (published by Gius. Odoardo Corazzini in 1900). The Florentine diarist knows all the principal facts concerning the raising of the obelisk.



Domenico Fontana's account books are preserved in the State archives in Rome. They give in figures an idea of what the reign of Sixtus V meant. In four years (1585-1589) 1,000,000 scudi were spent. The highest amount went for the Acqua Felice: 255,341 scudi. After this comes the Sixtine Chapel in Santa Maria Maggiore, with nearly 90,000 scudi. The erection of the obelisk of St. Peter's and the construction of the Vatican Library cost about the same, 37,000 or 38,000 scudi; the obelisk of St. John in Lateran, 24,611 scudi; and the one of Piazza del Popolo, 10,337 scudi; the obelisk of Santa Maria Maggiore may be considered cheap, 3000 scudi. The hospital for beggars demanded rather a large expenditure, 31,500 scudi, and the same was spent on the Quirinal. The "loggia delle benedizioni" of St. John in Lateran cost 11,000 scudi; the palace itself again more than 30,000. The restoring of Santa Sabina took 717 scudi, and the staircase from the Vatican to St. Peter's about 600 scudi. The Villa Montalto figures in the bill for 30,000 scudi. The fact that there is so little difference between the cost of a palace and a villa may be considered eloquent! Under the heading "different streets," are put another 12,000 scudi. In this list the costly dome of St. Peter's does not appear at all, as it belonged to another architect.

The detailed accounts of every separate work are still in existence, scattered over the archives

of the State and of the Vatican. These details often have a curious appearance, when, for instance, is mentioned the weight of the cross and mountains which have to be placed on the obelisk of Santa Maria Maggiore. Such notes bring us back to prose at once! In general the accounts are uninteresting as to the artists mentioned, as when, for instance, Master Cesare Nebbia and Master Giovanni Guerra, painters, present their bills for work executed by them and by painters under them.

In the accounts for the building of the Palace of St. John in Lateran we are at least cheered by a reference to Muziano and his landscape painting.

In these books the signature of Sixtus V often occurs. He signed the accounts, not only as a formality, but after having given them his strict personal attention. Stevenson, who has principally made use of the accounts of the Vatican Library, has been able to draw a general scheme of the papal finances as to the Pope's constructive and destructive activity.

When any work was finished, two architects were ordered to look over it and to compare its actual worth with the accounts brought in by their successful colleague. They sent their report to the Pope who studied it at his leisure, but nearly always ended by reducing the sum and by settling the account in his own way.



These details in Italian art history are not limited to the period of one Pope, nor to the characteristic personality of the former Fra Felice Peretti. Wherever we look, even in times apparently so poetical as the Middle Ages, we find regular financial traits and contracts between the artist and the man who orders and pays. The collections of printed letters by Italian artists are full of the strangest details. In our eyes they seem insulting to the character of the artists, but everything tends to show that it was not so understood. To contract to "paint a perfect likeness with real good colour," signing beforehand a document to that effect, or to receive a little sack with lapis lazuli carefully weighed, before making use of this precious material in a thing as cheap as a fresco, would not content any modern painter. The artists of the XV<sup>th</sup> and XVI<sup>th</sup> centuries accepted these conditions as the ordinary precaution of a shrewd patron.

The story of Fontana, when the sun of his glory went down, shows that none of the precautions he took were excessive.

The principal merit of Fontana will always lie in his reformation of the plan of Rome after a well-conceived, practical, and artistic scheme. No doubt he committed the unavoidable fault of destroying, but the advantages were great enough to maintain his reputation. The ideas which in-

spired both him and Sixtus V foreshadowed the future. The collaboration of a Pope and an architect prepared Rome for the use of following generations; they impressed the mournful seal of their time on the outside features of their own buildings. They built the general outline of the stage upon which the next century was to place brilliant scenery.

Rome deserves the interest of all who study the growth of modern cities, and the anatomy of the plans of past and future towns. The basilicas and older antiquities may be considered as permanent. Between those majestic stones, the arteries of principal streets have a free motion, but the stream of the public highway changes its course but slowly.

It took a hundred years to remove the city life from the Via Giulia and the Banchi, and the principal part of the Carnival from the Piazza Navona to the enduring Corso. We can, as an historical excursion, go in the opposite direction. Guided by history, we will not wonder to find the great bankers like the Fuggeri and the Florentines crowded in a lower Broadway, of which the apsis of San Giovanni dei Fiorentini would be the Battery.

Hübner has made of the walk through Rome under Sixtus V the most exquisite part of his book about the Pope. Here is the page relating to the quarter near the Tiber, translated

from the attractive French of this diplomatic cicerone :—

“The Via Giulia and Monserrato, the faubourg St. Germain, the fashionable quarters of yore are richest in palaces, but least animated. It is in the Banchi, in the long Strada Papale, and at the other side of the Piazza Navona, in the opulent quarter of the Spaniards, in the streets Coronari and Tor di Nona, that the Rome of Sixtus V displays, not its grandeur, but its activity, its wealth, and its exuberant vitality. From sunrise to the Ave Maria crowds throng in its badly paved but always cool and shaded streets. As we come nearer to the bridge (of Sant’ Angelo), the modern palaces—that is, those which were built within the last thirty years—become more numerous. These are the abodes of the new men, of prelates enriched by the Monti (financial institutions based on the bond system), but who are not rich enough to live as Cardinals, who for their vast residences, for the gardens around them, seek and find in the hills the space and air that they require. The great bankers also, after whom this quarter is named, have here, with their offices, houses, which might be those of princes.”

Hübner quotes as a proof the reports of the Venetian Ambassadors, which are in general the best correspondence we can consult about the larger cities of Italy during two or more centuries.

Paolo Paruto, for instance, said that : “ The public and private buildings, the temples and palaces, the streets, fountains and country houses built in later years, would be sufficient to adorn a first-class city.”

By this the Venetian must have meant the upper part of Rome. Sixtus V made no changes in the complicated network of streets around Banchi. Only since Italy as a kingdom made Rome its capital has this part of the city undergone a transformation by the large perforation of the Corso Vittorio Emanuele, including an opening in the former quarter of the Fuggeri, around the present Museo Barraco, and on the edge of the modern bed of the Tiber. Recently a widening of the Via de' Coronari, proposed amongst other changes, has raised an animated discussion, which called all the friends of ancient Rome to the threatened breach, to exercise the beneficial influence of opposition.

The present proposition is intended to give an outlet and passage-way to the growing traffic. The metamorphosis which took place under Sixtus V also had for an object the connecting of the principal places of worship. Next to the mediæval Via Sacra and the road of the “ Possesso,” indicated in one of the frescoes of the Vatican Library—the pontifical Via Triumphalis—he desired to create an easy itinerary for pilgrims and devotees in general. There was a kind of democratic feeling in this idea which should not be overlooked.



Some writer made of the transformation of Rome under Sixtus V the subject for a hymn full of pure symbolism. The Escorial, built in the form of San Lorenzo's gridiron, fades before the exalted vision of the Cross, formed by the Via Sistina and Via Pia (Venti Settembre), or the star of Montalto irradiating from the Quirinal, as it attracted the eye of a certain Bordini, who published during the reign of Sixtus a little illustrated volume of the Pontiff's principal works.

Fontana himself explains his practical and scenographical plan without unnecessary circumlocution. Like many men of talent, he is modest when referring to the masterpiece which was destined to stand throughout the ages.

The wonderful square before the main entrance of the Quirinal, adorned with the group of the Dioscuri, gives a fine idea of his artistic power. He says that the square was beautifully arranged for the comfort of the Consistories. The "Strada Pia" was lowered four feet to afford a view on Porta Pia, and many other highways, very wide and straight, were opened; "the Pope wished to facilitate the way for those who, moved by devotion or vows, are accustomed to visit the saintly places of the city of Rome, but especially the seven churches, so celebrated for the great indulgences which they bestow and the relics which they contain. In this way everyone can pass on foot, on horseback, or by carriage from any place



in Rome, and go almost directly to the most famous shrines."

With true modern spirit Fontana predicted that the direct connection of the most important points, which had before only been reached through long turnings, would become popular, and thereby greatly increase the value of adjoining properties. His acumen in these lines proved correct as to the Via Felice (Via Sistina, Quattro Fontane and Agostino Depretis) and its continuation in the direction of Santa Croce behind Santa Maria Maggiore. Papal decrees aided the intention of citizens who built along this way. Even by a verdict of the tribunal, their houses could not be pulled down. Fontana not only smoothed the road by filling up valleys to make an equal level, but also adorned the crossing point with four fountains (the Quattro Fontane), building on one of the corners the palazzo Mattei (later Albani). The diarist Ameiden declares that the Mattei built their palace on that spot in order to please Sixtus V.

The other connections were between Santa Maria Maggiore and San Giovanni (the Via Merulana, begun under Gregorius XIII); from Santa Maria Maggiore to San Marco (the Via Panisperna to Piazza Venezia); from San Lorenzo Fuori to Santa Maria degli Angeli and to Santa Maria Maggiore.

The important reformations that Rome under-

went in that quarter by the building of the railway station and the rectilinear modern quarters did away with Sixtus' beautiful Villa Montalto. This villa was one of the pioneers climbing up the hills. Unconscious of the future, but already original in his conceptions, Cardinal Felice Montalto had modestly begun the conquest of the desert. The extension of Rome, drawn in rough lines, started with vineyards, vegetables, and possibly a very unassuming cottage. In the middle of the XVI<sup>th</sup> century, the Celius already contained many such spots. (A precise topography of these can be taken from Lanciani's *Storia degli Scavi*.) The "villa" follows the "vigna" as a village grows out of a settlement.

The Villa Madama was the first of all to mount the promontories outside the city walls. More "giardini," the Vatican Gardens, and the Orti Farnesiani on the Palatine followed. Next came the Villa Mattei and the Villa Montalto, challenging the dread felt by the Romans of the plain between the Monti and the Tiber, against the Campagna inside the walls and the attending fevers.

The ordinary citizens' habitations first gathered slowly round the villas and afterwards swamped them like floating lava, after they had done their work in making these parts healthier and safer. Surrounded by cheaper houses, the villas lost in value, and became an easy prey to the spirit of speculation !

The maps of Rome in the XVI<sup>th</sup> century give some idea of the opening of this steady growth. The map of Bufalini (1551) portrays the city still within the ridge of the hills. The "Torre delle Milizie" (at the turn of the present Via Nazionale, already called in the Middle Ages, Magnanopoli) was then a mere boundary.

The real "vigna" appears behind Palazzo Riario (the place is now between Palazzo Corsini and the statue of Garibaldi on the Janiculus) on the map of Ugo Pinardi (1555). This may be a consequence of the fact that the map is—like most maps of the XVI<sup>th</sup> century—iconographical, that is, a perspective view (seen from the Janiculus). The Vigna Altieri is in the foreground and drawn with more detail, but we know from another source that the next real villa, the Villa Mattei, was at that period in the course of building, and that the only one of any importance besides these were the Orti Farnesiani on the Palatine, also in their beginning.

The other source I mean is the Italian *History of the Excavations in Rome*, by Professor Lanciani. He guides us over the hills and through the streets of Rome in the XVI<sup>th</sup> century with the greatest accuracy that topography and history will ever be able to attain. With this scientific work and the assistance of the maps we can imagine a walk in the Rome of those days.

On the map of 1555 the Fontana di Trevi and

the church Santi Apostoli are still landmarks between town and country. The most advanced post towards the battlefield of defeated antiquity is the garland of houses around the Capitoline hill. They advance timidly, where the sacred mount of the metropolis casts its shadow in the sunset.

In the map of 1561 private dwellings made their first rush up the hills and reached even further than the remains of the *Templum Solis*. A narrow tongue of houses follows the line of the old Suburra, from San Pietro in Vincoli towards Santa Maria Maggiore. In 1575, on another map, they seem to have come as far as the old arch near San Vito, which they have, without doubt, reached on the clear map of Marco Cartaro of 1576. Small islands of buildings cluster near St. John in Lateran and St. Clemente; these last are certainly the palace connected with S.S. Quattro Coronati, belonging to the Spaniards.

During the pontificate of Sixtus V, the beginning and extension of his Villa Montalto—covering the whole area of the present railway station and all the limits of the modern blocks as far as Santa Maria Maggiore, was the most decisive step on new ground.<sup>1</sup> The villa shared in the benefits of the Acqua Felice which passed through its territory. This same Acqua Felice may claim some

<sup>1</sup> See the map and the fresco S. M. Maggiore (Vatican Library) with the guarded gate of the villa.



credit in the city's next extension. Battalions of houses rose in close ranks between the old Suburra and the new Via Panisperna. They were supplied by the Acqua Felice, which has a fountain in the very centre of the rows in Piazza della Madonna dei Monti.

The palaces of Rome, as well as the dwellings of ordinary citizens, have come under the close attention of Baron de Hübner in his descriptions of the Italian capital. He mentions the frescoes in the "loggie" of the Vatican, made under Gregorius XIII as the best illustration of the aspect of Roman streets under Sixtus V. Indeed, as early as the end of the XVI<sup>th</sup> century we sadly lack the guidance of good engravings. It was only in the next century that the art of engraving was applied to such subjects as Roman squares and streets. Then they became innumerable, either by local artists like Falda, or foreigners like Swanevelt and Jacques Callot.

Hübner wonders that so few mediæval citizens' houses are left, but explains it as a consequence of the great poverty which prevailed in Rome for more than a century. The best specimens are still in Trastevere, in the same style as some of the old houses noticed by observing tourists in small towns like Alatri, Anagni, and Genazzano (along and by the road towards Naples), and in the mediæval quarter of Viterbo.

Another kind of Roman house has the "loggia,"



now usually walled in, next to the roof, like the house nearly opposite the Castel St. Angelo, on the corner of the Via di Banco di Santo Spirito; in the frescoes of the time of Gregorius XIII to be found in the third-floor "loggia" of the Court of St. Damasus in the Vatican Palace, this house still appears with an elegant open "loggia."

In the XVI<sup>th</sup> century—under the recent influence of Tuscan builders—the characteristic doorway with its mantle of rough-cut stone begins to appear. Even in the plainest façade this strong, self-reliant entrance gives relief. Later, the frame of the doorway undergoes the influence of the newer-fashioned windows with a square flat band. Where all the apertures of the façade are squares of this description the building is rarely attractive; so much uniformity seems to announce the commercial style of tenement blocks.

Perhaps the best house ever built (1542) for himself by an ordinary citizen in Rome is the existing Palazzo Sacchetti, in the Via Giulia (No. 43), planned and built by the architect Antonio di Sangallo for himself and his family. Very ugly examples of tenements are easily found. To the objection that few would seek for them, I answer that they assert themselves at the first arrival in the Eternal City.

An example of a nobleman's home of the time of Sixtus V is the beautiful Palazzo Valentini (now Palazzo Provinciale) in the Piazza Venezia, de-

scribed in the letters of Girolamo Catena, who mentions in his publication that, in August, 1588, several antiquities were discovered when digging the foundations.

The attraction of historical walks in Rome becomes greater when they are guided by the excellent publications of Italian and foreign specialists. The mediæval legends of Rome can be enjoyed with great profit in such books as the *Topographia Urbis Romæ*, by Urlichs, containing descriptions of Rome from the beginning to the end of the Middle Ages. Scholars who desire to go deeper into the subject will find in that book a large amount of information concerning the continuation of classical tradition in the Rome of the Middle Ages, taken from numerous genuine sources.

For more general study and even as an intellectual pastime I cannot too highly recommend the atlases of de Rossi and Major Rocchi.

The usual guide-books for Rome's learned visitors in the Middle Ages were the so-called *Mirabilia Urbis Romæ*. They are known in different publications of the subsequent centuries and in translations into various languages, especially after the invention of topography. In a modernised form, after the year 1510, by Francesco Albertini (published with a German introduction and notes by Schmarsow), the *opusculum*

*de Mirabilibus novæ urbis Romæ* leads us through the new Rome of Julius II.

Between Julius II and Sixtus V the printing press produced a copious library of books about Rome. The census reports published from the manuscript by Armellini and by Gnoli can be used as the most reliable collection of statistics and topographical dates.

For the time of Sixtus V we should use a description of Rome discovered in 1883 by Lanciani in a manuscript of the Barberini Library. (He also published a document of topography called the *Itinerarium Einsidlense*, dating from the early Middle Ages.)

This publication, known to archæologists as *Codice Barberiniano XXX 89*, will be used more extensively in the next chapter. I quote here such facts as delineate the outer aspect of Sixtine Rome.

It goes from Magnanapoli to the Cancelleria, and then to the Arco di Portogallo, one of the two demolished arches formerly in the Corso. It mentions a “vigna” of the Massimo family near Santa Sabina, the second oldest street sign in Rome, in the Suburra (dating from Alexander VI); at the same time this still shows where this street, continuing the Roman name, had progressed under the same Pope; the Villa Papa Giulio, now still a museum, but containing at that time more authentic antiquities than the present place

possesses; the Piazza Colonna and the Capitoline Museum in its first century, founded 14th December, 1471.

The museum in its early years contained some famous bronzes, such as the "Boy extracting the Thorn." This elegant statue must have been found much earlier, for it gave Brunellesco his inspiration for a figure in the competition for the bronze doors of the Battistero in Florence. In the time of Sixtus V Fontana may have presented the museum with the ball from the top of the obelisk. Grimaldi, the truthful historian of the death and resurrection of the basilica of St. Peter's, mentioned this bronze as numbering in the Capitoline collection without any inscription (this last circumstance being contrary to what he had found in an old manuscript).

The author of the Barberini manuscript notes the empty base of the statue of Marcus Aurelius near the Lateran; the oldest street sign in Rome on Campo de' Fiori; "Capo di Bove" (oxen-head: the tomb of Cæcilia Metella, thus called for reasons easily understood!); the chapel, founded in 1563, marking the spot of Peter and Paul's separation on the left hand of the road between the city gate and St. Paul's; the "temple of Vesta" facing Schola Græca; the "house of Cola di Rienzo" still known to him as the "house of Pilatus." This name came from mystery plays of the Middle Ages in the form of processions which started



there and went to the Arch of Lazzaro. The tradition had slowly vanished in the time of Sixtus V, or at least had become obscure to the anonymous author of *Cod. Barber.*, as he says that "he does not know why the place is called so."

He goes on to point out another street sign in the Via della Rupe Tarpea, both street and sign being due to Gregorius XIII; the old Fontana di Trevi, with the name of Nicholas V; the tower, Tor de Conti, which he calls "well built, though rather old and dilapidated." The Palazzo Spada even then exercised its charm, and the inscription of Lorenzo Mallio on his house in the "Piazza Giudea" (now Via Portico d'Ottavia) already attracted public attention, because of the size of the characters—"more than a foot high," he says. Then the new villas, like the Villa Medici, belonging to the Cardinal "who laid down the hat and took to himself a wife"; he follows the old city walls, visits the Palazzo del Duca d'Urbino, which has given way to the present Palazzo Doria; and studies the maps in the gallery of the Carte Geografiche, which must then have been in their early freshness. Outside the city he reaches the so-called tomb of Nero, and gathers knowledge from the people who have crossed the country around Rome.

I will certainly return to this manuscript; it is specially interesting, showing a taste for antiquity



in the times of this Pope, proved by the collections described by the author.

Amongst the palaces famous in the days of Sixtus V, which sheltered persons of renown or men who rose in fortune under Fra Peretti, we must note the following :

The Palazzo Lante, which belonged to the Grand Duke of Tuscany. It was built (1513-1516) for the Medici (Giuliano de' Medici, brother of Leo X), as their coat of arms on the ground floor still shows. During the reign of Sixtus V, the French Ambassador Pisany lived there. Afterwards, the Grand Duke of Tuscany—formerly Cardinal Ferdinando—occupied it as his Embassy in Rome. The Marquis Pisany used to entertain the aristocracy of Rome in this palazzo, and betting ran high on occasions. Already in that time the question arose which led to so many difficulties in the following century, when large sums were played for in the ex-territorial palaces of the diplomatic representatives. But not even Sixtus V would, as Hübner states, allow the Governor of Rome to interfere.

Outside this particular case Sixtus did not show any clemency towards amusements based on chance. He forbade betting in general, as we have seen. Playing with dice was punishable, even on the onlookers, by a fine of 100 scudi for the first time, 200 the second, and 300 the third. For those

who could not pay their fines, corporal punishment and even the galleys followed. Playing-cards were taxed by stamps.

Professionals who endeavoured to make a science and business of Chance had a hard time under Sixtus V. Perhaps some had predicted their own destiny at the beginning of his reign.

The one form permitted was astrology about the weather—an innocent art still exercised in Italy under the authorship of a mystic Barbanera. The gentle profession of palmist even was discountenanced.

The name of the Medici was attached to a palazzo, now better known under another name, Palazzo Firenze, actually the seat of the Ministry of Justice, and kept up with such care that it does not strike one as an old building. The courtyard and the enclosed “loggia” of glass in the rear, still speak of its origin and antiquity. Florence has other reminders in the Eternal City at which we do not wonder, when we remember the number of important Tuscan Popes who resided here, the influence of Tuscan art, and the high financial standing of the Florentine bankers, who had branch offices even as far away as Bruges in Flanders. I quote this last instance purposely, as the financial dealings of Florence were in direct relationship with the spreading of artistic influences. (To the attention of the German scholar, I commend the articles of

Dr. A. Warburg about the connection between art and commerce in Florence itself, and the commercial relations between Florence and Bruges, published separately in the *Jahrbücher der Preussischen Kunstsammlungen*. The paragraphs about the famous painting of van der Goes in the Uffizi are among the keenest and most penetrating researches about life and art in reciprocal relation.)

Under Leo X de' Medici (1513–1521) thirty Florentine banks existed in Rome. The seat of the Florentines was then, of course, near the business quarter, where the church of S. Giovanni dei Fiorentini stands as a Tuscan reminder, as also the beautiful lily in bas-relief on the wall of a house opposite and the appellation: Via del Consolato (the Florentine “consulate”). In the XVII<sup>th</sup> century their place in the banking world of Rome was usurped by the Genoese, who still are pre-eminent on the Roman Exchange.

The diarist Ameiden, in his *Relazione di Roma*, 1641 (in a Barberini manuscript), writes: “Many other families, however old and noble in their own country, but who have not yet passed the second generation of citizenship in Rome, came from Florence and Genoa for some banking business which often died in the cradle! After the Genoese had become rich by commerce with Spain, they left these towns, too much exhausted by usury, and brought their profits to Rome. Now

about 600,000 scudi go out of Rome to Genoa every year, and, as this is a notable sum, it exhausted the Exchange here in a short time."

The name of the Medici is certainly most in evidence in the villa on the Pincian hill. In the time of Sixtus V, Cardinal Ferdinando de' Medici had, in the year 1576, started a treatise to buy the ground and the villa (built between 1544 and 1560 by Annibale Lippi) according to a printed document. The Cardinal lived for a while in the villa and kept there a small zoological garden. The Dutchman, Arnold Buchellius, notes it as a curiosity. When the Cardinal had left the city and taken off the purple, he sent from Florence for his exotic menagerie, of which bears, lions, and ostriches seem to have been the most extraordinary samples.

The whole set was shipped from the harbour of Rome, then at Ripa, most probably to Leghorn. Lions were not unusual in Rome, at least in a state of captivity. The city kept a lion on the Capitol as early as 1283. Once, the city lion escaped (1408), to be found later and captured by a passing policeman at the foot of the Capitoline hill. Another lion killed several children who came too near his cage, The criminal was executed (1414), but his noble body received burial. The most amusing incident occurred with his successor. The animal having died, the keeper ever afterwards persecuted the city with a claim



for a "life-long" salary for the care of the lion. The demand of the guardian of the dead beast is certainly unique in the annals of sinecures.

The personality of Cardinal Ferdinando, who had not received the highest ordinations, and for this reason could leave his ecclesiastical post when political reasons called him, become a Grand Duke and marry soon afterwards, should be familiar to all visitors to Florence from the statue in the Piazza dell' Annunziata, made in 1640 by order of his nephew, thirty years after his death, out of the metal of captured Turkish guns (Pietro Tacca moulded it after the model of Giovanni Bologna). In the splendid portrait of Eleonora di Toledo (by Bronzino) in the Uffizi, the little boy with large eyes, standing near his mother, was once supposed to represent him as a child, though later researches contradict this theory.

Medici's rival in the esteem of Sixtus V was old Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, who died under the pontificate, spending his last years either in the Palazzo della Cancelleria (its gate is the work of Fontana, done after the Cardinal Alessandro Montalto had been appointed vice-cancelliere), in his summer homes Caprarola and Palo, or in his garden on the Palatine, the "Orti Farnesiani," still in existence. In his own palace, the Palazzo Farnese, architect and workmen were still busy, as the loggia facing the Tiber was not finished until 1589. Caprarola and Palo often received guests



coming to or leaving Rome, as a first or last resting place, in a day's journey.

Sixtus V spent one night at Palo on his journey towards Civitavecchia. The castle, with its mediæval air, still to be seen from the railroad, often lodged most important personages when they had reached Civitavecchia in galleons from Marseilles, or, like the Spanish Ambassador, from Barcelona to Genoa over sea, and over land along Civitavecchia and Palo. The inner road for travellers by land usually passed through Siena and Viterbo. The last halt was at Civita Castellana, or, nearer to Rome, at Castelnuovo di Porto, for ordinary travellers, who were not honoured with hospitality at Castle Bracciano or Villa Caprarola. Civita Castellana was a crossing point over the road which led by Terni to the pilgrim's goal, Loreto. Though these places have recently again been brought into better connection with Rome, they are not yet visited as much as they deserve. The walk from Castelnuovo back to Prima Porta by the old Via Flaminia offers majestic views, and, at the first sight of St. Peter's dome, one feels a thrill of emotion of a much purer nature than at the end of a tiresome journey by rail. To those who, in our days, still wish to accomplish sentimental journeys, it means much to know that they share the feelings of former generations along the wayside.

In Caprarola, evocations of the past naturally

become intensified. The XVI<sup>th</sup> century seems nearer in the long street with the Farnese lilies everywhere, leading up to the "Rocca." The Rocca, a mild form of Acropolis, the high fortification typical of mountainous Italy in the Middle Ages, is the right name for the building, rising straight on a rectangular basis. The small village at its foot reminds us of a mediæval settlement under the protection of a castle. The gloomy style of private houses of the middle of the XVI<sup>th</sup> century, especially in the pontificate of Gregorius XIII, prevails in this Farnesian spot. The bare strength of Monte Soracte and its severity suits this historical scenery very well.

On the road to Viterbo, the deserted hamlet near the old Veji still bears the name of the family; it is called Isola Farnese. The Cardinal, coming from Caprarola, had passed through this place, when a foreign tourist, the afore-mentioned Buchellius, met him on the Via Cassia, near the so-called tomb of Nero. The same spot is mentioned in Montaigne's *Travels*. The French philosopher said that the ground was not very convenient for military marches, as it was cut open by deep crevasses. This observation strikes me as very cold and practical, and I like to turn my thoughts from this stern man to the painters and engravers of the following century, who so dearly loved that same valley, the "Insugherata."





*Photo. Mascioni*

MAP IN CAPRAROLA, SHOWING THE NEW WORLD.



The villa at Caprarola is often mentioned in the daily chronicles of the time of Sixtus V, when travellers of importance departed or arrived.

The next stop was often Bagnaja—the present Villa Lante—belonging to Cardinal Gambara, whose name still occurs to all visitors of Viterbo, whence Bagnaja and the Villa can easily be visited in an afternoon.

This Villa was a bone of contention in the time of Sixtus V. Cardinal Gambara died in May, 1587, and at once the question arose as to whether Sixtus V would imitate the example of Julius III and give the “delicious place” to his “nipote” (nephew, or near relative in general); if not, it would come into the possession of the Bishop of Viterbo. The Bishop, resting this claim upon a verdict of Pius V, went to the place and found to his great surprise that Cardinal de’ Medici was urging his right as heir of Baldovino del Monte, a nephew of Julius III. The Pope decided in favour of the Apostolic Chamber, as, in his opinion, the money spent by Cardinal Gambara in embellishing the place belonged to the Church, and did not come from his own funds. The vice-legate of Viterbo was ordered to execute the decree. On June 3, only a few weeks after the question had been raised, Cardinal Alessandro Montalto received the governorship of Bagnaja (where the emblem of the papal coat of arms still shows the accessories of the group of the principal fountain: mountains,



and pears), as successor of the poetical biographer of Christopher Columbus.

Bagnaja already had a widely-spread reputation before the time of Sixtus V. Montaigne, who visited the place in September, 1581, put it on a line with Tivoli (the Villa d'Este) and Pratolino (near Florence). The waterworks pleased him especially, and his sceptical mind was not displeased by the capricious inventions of the engineer, a certain Tomaso da Siena who had placed in a boat, on one of the little lakes, a couple of arquebusiers shooting water from their weapons. So far he belonged to his generation, and shared the general taste for playful applications of water and water-power. I do not know if any of the water-organs described with admiration by tourists of former centuries is still in working order. We all know of the water-clock on the Pincian hill in Rome, which goes fairly steadily. . . . Often it stops.

A curious example is the set of fountains in the Vatican garden, representing an altar fully adorned. But even there a practical spirit has employed the waters with which the effect is produced; they drive electric dynamos for the Apostolic Palaces.

Villa d'Este is a name to be handled with care when spoken of during the reign of Sixtus V. It must be borne in mind, that two villas of that name existed at that time: one at Tivoli, and one in Rome, on the Quirinal, which

gradually made way for the growing pontifical palace. Both villas were founded by Ippolito d'Este, Cardinal of Ferrara (1572). Under Sixtus V, another Cardinal d'Este often lived in the villa at Tivoli, and, as Cardinal representing the interests of France in the Holy College, he offered hospitality there to Pisany, the diplomatic representative of that country, when he had to leave Rome for a while on account of political dissensions with the Pope.

The Quirinal hill under Sixtus V contained several villas. The most famous of these was, next to the Villa d'Este, the villa built by Cardinal Rodolfo Carpi de' Principi di Carpi, who in the year 1554 owned a "vigna" near the property of the deceased Cardinal Grimaldi. The Villa Carpi afterwards passed into the possession of the family Sforza.

The whole territory of the Quirinal hill, with all its details, is clearly portrayed on the map, "Lafréry-Dupérac," and treated in the above-mentioned Italian *History of the Excavations*, with every point of interest for the student of topography and archæology.

The Palazzo Borghese was begun in the reign of Sixtus V. The *Avvisi* relate, May 21, 1586, that the Spanish Cardinal Dezza bought the Palazzo del Griglio, "near the Ortaccia, a place worthy of the Spaniards." The Ortaccia had a very bad reputation. The sneer at the Spaniards remains

on account of the letter-writer. Cardinal Dezza paid 17,000 scudi for the palazzo. In the following July, the palace in its early form was almost completed. It must have been a very modest residence. The Cardinal was eccentric and enjoyed some strange pastimes, amongst them being the following amusement: to shake French and Spanish coins against each other, shouting, "Guerra! guerra!" and then, laying them peacefully apart, to exclaim, "Paz! Paz!"

The palazzo of the Sapienza—now still the University building in Rome—was restored under Sixtus V. Lectures were given there every day. The chief place in the scientific world of Rome was taken by Fulvio Orsini, after the demise of the world-famous Muretus (1585). The life and works of Fulvio Orsini have been described by de Nolhac in a book which only pretends to give a reconstruction of his library, as its title, *La bibliothèque de Fulvio Orsini*, indicates, but which also contains much information about the interesting world around him, far more than the sub-title, *Contributions à l'histoire des collections d'Italie et à l'étude de la Renaissance*, would lead us to expect.

Of great use for the history of science, literature, and art about the year 1600 is also the book of another Frenchman, Dejob, about the influence of the Council of Trent (*de l'Influence du Concile de Trente sur la Littérature et les Beaux-arts chez*

*les Peuples Catholiques*). Both books are written with French elegance and very pleasant to read, for the authors have known how to present the results of their serious studies in a most agreeable form.

The anecdotal side of Roman scholars at the end of the XVI<sup>th</sup> and the early XVII<sup>th</sup> century is to be found in a diverting book by a certain Janus Victorius Roscius, or, in his Greek name, Johannes Nicius Erythræus, who died in Rome in 1647. He called his book *Pinacotheca*—picture gallery. It seems, indeed, to contain pictures, treated with great liberty of fancy, rather than real portraits, and not a few caricatures. The founder of Christian archæology, Bosio, is treated very harshly. The story that this explorer gave banquets inside the Catacombs, indeed, such clamorous feasts that the people passing overhead were frightened away by this sound of resurrection, makes any intelligent reader suspicious! Another story about a singular scientist, who lived more or less like Diogenes, seems a little less impossible.

Italy has seen a great many individualities outside the ordinary, and Rome has seen many prophets since the Sibyls!

This singular type in the *Pinacotheca* dressed very poorly, carried his money around in a bag, bought the best fish in the market, and treated himself to his own cooking and exquisite wines, in



a single room, where the rest of his time was devoted to reading the works of classical philosophers, his examples through life! In that man the material for a Doctor Faustus was lost. He might at least have sat for one of the many paintings representing even more abstracted colleagues while preparing an attack on the great Unknown, or seeking the trying secret of gold-making in a dusty pawnbroker's shop.

Erythræus considered all eccentric geniuses with a pleased but disapproving eye. His heart was with those of a well-balanced nature, and, when he can praise and admire, his anecdotes are not less good than his satirical ones. Real Roman air, like a heavy scirocco wind with the smell of old damp ground and walls, pervades his descriptions. He is very Roman. He contributes to the definition already so difficult to work out, of the *Roma Romana*, including the *Roma Romanesca*.

His collection of lives opens with a scholar, who died at the age of ninety-four in the first year of the pontificate of Sixtus V, a Spaniard named Martinus Azpilcueta (†1586, June 21st). His epitaph and bust are in the entrance of the Portuguese church, Sant' Antonio dei Portoghesi. He started his career in Portugal, came to Rome and gained the favour of three Popes: Pius V, Gregorius XIII, and Sixtus V. Gregorius XIII loved him, as Erythræus tells us, "so much, that when the Pope went through the city—on horseback as



usual, so strong was he even in his old age—and passed by his house, he always called him out and kept him talking an hour or so in the road.” This learned man in his latter years was accustomed to dictate his work so quickly that his amanuensis had difficulty in following the course of his speech. He observed an extremely frugal diet, maintaining such good health that, when over ninety years of age, he carried the heavy monstrance in a procession around the church Sant’ Andrea delle Frate. On this occasion the people compared him with Simeon the Just carrying Christ in his arms. In his younger days, in Salamanca and Toulouse, he gave morning lectures in canonic law and spent part of the afternoon in looking after the sick people in the hospital, making their beds and feeding them.

As a child, Erythræus had known this Azpilcueta, and, during his early years, had often quarrelled with his brother for the honour of bringing the good man his salary, sure of not being sent away without a few coins. Their uncle should by right have carried out this little mission, but he allowed the children to do so.

Sixtus V did not forget himself and his successors whilst constructing his Sixtine Rome. In the regular building up of the city, followed by the succeeding pontiffs, he takes a conspicuous place also for his work in Apostolic Palaces: he

built the Lateran and added to the Vatican and Quirinal.

The history of the Vatican Palace is very intricate. Perhaps Sixtus' part in the construction is the clearest, like an added chapter instead of general revision. His part is solid, square, and dominating, and the eye wanders naturally from the Cathedral to the Palace, still the residence of his successors; none amongst them, though, has taken his name, owing to the reason that though Sixtus Quintus sounded well, Sixtus Sixtus would not have done so.

The Belvedere, the gallery of Gregorius XIII, the courtyard of Bramante, the Borgia apartments are cardinal points in the complex buildings, and form a sort of ring which the wing of Sixtus V closed in a definite way. After Sixtus V's successor, who completed that part, only a few additions of any importance have been made to the Vatican Palace, as a residence. The chief expenditure for building purposes in the XVII<sup>th</sup> century went first to St. Peter's and then to the Quirinal.

The Sixtine Palace was an extension of the Loggie, a happy prolongation of the verandah in which the Popes went out to enjoy the sunny air and the view of the city. The decision was surely not taken, as is supposed, for the pleasure of looking at the obelisk, but for reasons of health, as finally some of the Popes became aware that the damp

quarters near the court and the rear shortened their lives. I learned that some of the internal removals of the Popes and their households constitute a question which may not be resolved even after special studies.

In studying History, we often come to a blank page where it is least expected, and, in Italy, we cannot be too careful when that happens. The sources of information are so numerous and so various, and civilisation is here so much older than in other countries, that historiography in Ausonia never comes to a real dead point. The peninsula, divided in many States and containing several cities, each its own centre of culture, is like a great mosaic. Often missing parts can be filled in with the help of the remaining lines and figures. Burckhardt's book gives a fair insight into the highly developed state of "Culture in the Renaissance." A glance at the bookshelves of one of the well-arranged reference sections in Italian libraries will help to widen the new-comer's expectations of a pleasant study of that period.

I should be glad if I could feel that this book will help to plan out fresh Roman studies in later times. Taking the afore-mentioned incident (of household removals) as an example, the lacunæ might convince us that the material is rich ; if it were not so, we should not be surprised that no information be forthcoming for one particular detail, though it is true that, from the middle of the

XVI<sup>th</sup> century, such details have been better studied than the history of Rome as a whole, excepting in the classical work of Ranke and the very solid biography of Sixtus V by Baron de Hübner.

The “*rat de bibliothèque*” is a domestic animal in Rome.

Go to a real Roman library on a nice spring day, or in October, and you will understand it.

Take the Casanatense, or the Angelica, or the Vallicelliana.

The temperature, often cold in winter, is now very agreeable. The light falls from large high windows, throwing golden touches on the old walnut or mahogany shelves and over yellow-grey parchment, with its browned innocence of calf bindings, faded gold characters and withered gilt ornament. The volumes stand in groups of the same size; an army in order of battle. On those shelves lie undiscovered mines, forgotten churchyards, catacombs for a few worshippers. . . .

The best known example of a Roman library “*rat*” was the Abbate Cancellieri, who hardly ever printed a page without a footnote, and often pages of notes with barely one line of text at the top. He touched on nearly every subject connected with Rome: an amazing whirlwind of facts, dates, and quotations from books and manuscripts.

The Vatican Library has his heritage of manuscript books. He lived in the beginning of the



XIX<sup>th</sup> century, near the Fontana del Mascherone, behind Palazzo Farnese. Amongst his most interesting and readable works—I mean readable as to the composition, not the print, which is microscopical—is a small book about the climate of Rome.

The palace of Sixtus V was made for the purpose of enjoying the sun and the fresh air, as is seen by the inscription bearing his name above the entrance leading to papal audiences in the Cortile di San Damaso. Sixtus, like other pontiffs, added to what he found in existence. This system continues regularly, carefully, all the time. A walk through the Vatican, now open to the public, can be made an historical journey through the subsequent reigns of the Popes, before and since his pontificate, reflecting the style of their different times. Lately great care has been taken, under the guidance of the artist Seitz—much better here as an architect and decorator in historical styles than as a creator in his mosaics for the tomb of Pius IX in San Lorenzo Fuori—to keep up the predominating features of each epoch. For instance, the reference library of the Vatican remains in the style of the rooms made and decorated under Sixtus V. The Borgia apartments are artistically lighted in the fashion of their time. The decoration of these apartments is applied in the new Pinacotheca, planned by Seitz, who died before it was solemnly opened.



The journalists of the time of Sixtus V wrote as early as the spring of 1587, that the Pope had made known his intention "to complete the circuit of the Loggie." Perhaps they meant, to close in the four sides ; but it is hard to believe that Sixtus V conceived this plan, which would have altered the character of the famous Loggie.

It took two years before the plan—in its more reasonable form—came to execution. On the 30th April, 1589—the architect Fontana mentions it in his book—the work had been begun. Since then the expenses for the Vatican Palace are regularly noted in the account book of the *Introitus et Exitus* of Sixtus V, 1000 scudi at a time ; for instance : in the month of September, 1589, four times 1000 scudi. The immediate successor of Sixtus V—Urbanus VII, who reigned but one month—retained Fontana as his architect, giving him 15,000 scudi to continue the work, and intending to place the coat of arms of Sixtus V on the building.

The Vatican Palace was finished under Clemens VIII, when Fontana had already left Rome. The history is written on the façade of the building : the windows are still adorned with elements of the coat of arms of Sixtus V, the frieze appertaining to the Aldobrandini armoury.

The Lateran Palace—"built by one Pope"—as Fontana states with satisfaction for his master and himself—did, not as a residence, please the high

dignitaries for whom it was destined. The fundamental idea had been—according to the biographer of Sixtus V, Galesinus—to give the Pope an abode near the church of his episcopate, St. John in Lateran. But that was not sufficient to compel anybody, either the Pope or the Sacred College, to remain there more than was strictly necessary, although the building was constructed with that idea—it was too distant from St. Peter's to continue the mediæval custom.

The inner decoration is so far interesting as it shows the awakening study of the early times of Christianity, associated with this spot by Constantinus and Helena. The day was not far off when the learned Baronius and his school would go out in the Campagna stretching behind the palace to seek, in the neglected underground passages in the catacombs, lasting documents for that history. This circle seems to be intelligently completed with the present museum of Christian archæology, and the marvellous inscriptions of the catacombs walled in the courtyard loggie. Does not Rome everywhere present volumes of the history of civilisation?

Sixtus V surrounded himself with pictures of his own Rome, placing them in the Vatican Library, in his Villa Montalto, and also in his pontifical palace, showing the city's transformation under his rule. Those who are interested will find them in the largest room on the floor once

containing the Lateran picture gallery, and where, in another room, the mosaic of Caracalla's Baths is still shown. The panel representing the former gardens of Cardinal du Bellay in the semi-circular Esedra of Diocletian's Baths, the splendid entrance of the present Via Nazionale and the view towards Porta Pia from the square before the Quirinal are well worth a few steps. A fine set of reproductions of drawings and rare prints of Diocletian's Baths and their surroundings illustrates an article by the Italian Director-General of Fine Arts, Corrado Ricci, in the *Bollettino d'Arte* of 1909, concerning the readaptation of the original plan of Michelangelo for the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli.

The Lateran Palace surely was neglected soon after Sixtus V. In the travels of the Prince de Condé, who visited Rome in 1622, it is related that "the palace is falling in ruins, and only used to store corn"!

I have not found it mentioned that Sixtus V made any lengthy stay in his new palace. He remained there a few hours at the most. His favourite summer resorts were the Quirinal or his Villa Montalto.

The activity of Sixtus V and of his two architects, Domenico Fontana and Giacomo della Porta, has on different points of Rome attacked venerable structures—old churches. We find ourselves with Sixtus at the beginning of an era of

thoughtless restorations and more alarming innovations and additions which have only come to a decided end in the reign of the present Pope Pius X. The leading experts and his æsthetical advisers of the very artistic pontiff, who already as Cardinal Sarto gave proof of a sound and solid taste in matters of art, have adopted a system of restoration which may be called exemplary. The studies of de Rossi and the revival of art history in Italy have produced this great result. The rehabilitation of ancient Christian art can be seen in the catacombs of SS. Nereo and Achilleo at the Via delle Sette Chiese (between San Paolo Fuori and San Sebastiano). A fine specimen of a restored basilica is to be found in the interior of Santa Maria in Cosmedin. The recognition of the Romanic style, as the style for Rome, has brought forward the new churches in the upper quarters. There we have the proof, even between a hybridical conglomeration of architecture, apt to make a "villino" and even any number of "villini," that a return to the apsis of San Giovanni e Paolo is one of the highest inspirations to be followed in Rome. A comparison between the church of San Gioacchino in the Prati, and the Roman parish churches lately created, or the difference between the mosaics on Pius IX's tomb and the decoration in the crypt of Monte Cassino, will at once prove the progress made in a few years!



Much depends, of course, on personal and racial feelings. It may be that those new Roman churches will displease many strangers and many Italians, but they will be recognised by scholars and artists as an improvement due to the study of the elements and history of Christian art.

It is regrettable that a part, at least, of this tribute to the high standing and worth of early Christian art and Roman architecture did not always raise its voice when the fate of old places of worship was to be discussed, and before many a destruction had been decided upon.

The notes or drawings made on those occasions remain precious sources of information. The inner decoration of San Paolo Fuori, before the great fire, is quite well known to us from a collection of drawings.

That is little, compared to the valuable manuscript of Grimaldi, now among the treasures of the Vatican Library, and to be preserved for ages to come, by a special system, invented by the Librarian Padre Ehrle: of pasting sheets of thin silk veiling over each page. It contains in notarial style and with numerous illustrations drawn and painted by hand, the entire history of the demolition of old St. Peter's and of the construction of the new church during the same period. It would seem as if from an intuition this document,



of the size of a heavy volume, had been set as a defence against the reproaches of posterity !

The remodernisation of ancient basilicas and churches since the Middle Ages has been inspired by many different reasons and causes.

We see that laymen's taste is responsible for painted wood to represent marble, wholesale polychromated stucco and paper flowers ; the exhortation of Pius X has not yet done away with all detriments to art. This is the most common, but in the end the most easily removed æsthetic evil. The situation became much more grave when prominent families had ancient rights on certain chapels and used their privileges to transform these in accordance with the current taste. They often opposed a thorough restoration, alleging the undeniable right of peace for the tombs of past generations and for the place of worship for the living, marking the chapel with their coat of arms or honoured names. It has happened that art historians removed altars in order to discover the frescoes they covered, and had but a moment in which to photograph them, after which the much less beautiful disguising monument had to be replaced.

Reviews of art history in Italy often quote amusing and interesting cases.

I remember that a valuable painting on wood of the XV<sup>th</sup> century was once used as a door !

Every hope of redemption is lost when a syste-

matic innovation has been undertaken by a patron of a church, who is an obstinate and convinced enemy of ancient forms. I fancy that Gambara, in Viterbo, was of that kind. At least it occurs to me that, on a trip to that wonderful town, we often denounced his name or his emblem where ancient beauty was changed for ever into a cold reasoning structure without age or charms. Some of this feeling of disappointment comes over us when we look at ceilings over-rich, over-carved, or over-gilded, and at mosaics too bright and shining, in the basilicas of Rome with their inborn aristocracy and their pedigree lost in the first centuries of Christian architecture.

As to Sixtus V, we have so many contradictions that we hardly know which was his standpoint in the great question of inner and outer decoration of churches: Christian art, based on history and archæology, or an open door for popular taste. In his reign and under his supervision were built the elegant façade of San Girolamo a Ripetta (at the corner of Via Tomacelli) and the very dignified one of S. Spirito in Sassia. Those belong still to the noble class, of which the façade of Santa Caterina ai Funari is not so much a leading as an unsurpassed example. In the chapel of S. Maria Maggiore the taste and growth of the style are different. The outside is unassuming. The interior—now restored, but without deteriorating the original—asserts its beauty. The

custom is continued of utilising the debris of the past.

It seems that the best part of the old Lateran Palace was used in the decoration of the chapel. No Pope before Sixtus V could have done this and been so sure of his principle. The luxuriant style is inaugurated. Costly carved marble reliefs of difficult workmanship are added even to sepulchral monuments in order to convey to the biographer the allegorical acts of the two Popes. Here we feel the approach of the XVII<sup>th</sup> century with the luxury and theatrical emotion of the exaggerated life-size figures in the altar paintings. We feel the warm, wealthy brilliancy through the chill of the marble Sixtine Chapel of S. M. Maggiore.

The same Pope restored S. Sabina and did not mar the integrity of its rhythmic composition.

Again, the same Pope wept before the frescoes of San Stefano Rotondo—not with pity for its painters. . . .

The reader will understand that I give up further attempts at explanation.

The name of Sixtus V as a builder of Rome will ever be connected with the construction of St. Peter's dome. What had been a subject of discussion under several of his predecessors came to a culmination in the last two years of his reign. The custom of placing the name of the pontiff, who completed a building or its important parts,

brought the pontifical denomination of the former Fra Peretti into an apotheosis in the interior ring, where the ribs of the dome meet. If Fontana's name is not officially coupled with Sixtus', History has rendered him justice by giving him the place he deserved next to the official architect, Giacomo della Porta. It seems that the solidity of the construction—in a less spherical form than Bramante had planned—belongs in many ways to the technical genius of Fontana.

It is to be hoped that the plan will be carried out of forming a museum of the models and drawings belonging to the fabric of St. Peter's. Then it will be easy to acquire an idea of the curious treasures at this moment reposing out of the reach of the public on the roof of the basilica. In the Dædalian corridors, some narrow and dark, like secret passages, halls, little rooms, flying staircases, tightly locked doors, sudden glass domes of chapels far beneath, heavy cables to ring unseen bells, only a "sampietrino" (the popular name for the servants of the basilica) can find his way. In case we might go astray in those elevated catacombs of higher St. Peter's, tiles with clear short indications have been cemented everywhere; these tiles warn the "sampietrino," who is familiar with the ground plan of the basilica, exactly over which of its sections he is standing.

I have heard that this labyrinth still contains a library and some archives. I did not see them, but



I can imagine that they must be inspiring. A new territory in the Vatican is always astonishing, large, rich, and interesting.

The museum of the Fabric of San Pietro on the cupola is quite confusing. It has models of the erection of the obelisk, or at least of some obelisk—I do not think that it is Fontana's—samples of wood used for a “castello,” models of intelligent construction by Maestro Zabaglia (author, I believe, of a book on the subject, and surely organiser of the Sampietrini-corps), to reach every point inside the dome—models of other domes, like that of the Pantheon and of St. M. del Fiore in Florence, used for comparison; and last, but not least, the model of St. Peter's made by Antonio da San Gallo after the original proposed by Bramante to Julius II. This wooden model represents the basilica with two separate towers. It is of such large dimensions that one can enter and obtain an idea of what the church would have been if the Greek cross had been applied instead of the Latin one. This model was brought there by Clemens XI in 1704.

Grimaldi, in his official report of the transformation of old St. Peter's, writes about this model, and also speaks of another, in plaster and wood, which was the original plan of Michelangelo, “keeping the dome a little lower. But Giacomo della Porta, Michelangelo's pupil, planned it higher, thinking that it would be stronger and



more beautiful. He even changed the dome over the Gregorian chapel, which was constructed rather low, after the model of the great dome."

A copy in wood of Buonarotti's model dated 1557 is said to be in the museum of the church.

The old "campanile" (bell tower) of St. Peter's survived through the transformation of its surroundings until very late, when its demolition became a necessity for the construction of the façade. In the month of October, 1610, this typical Roman campanile, emerging from the newly-spreading church in all its stages of development (on the coloured drawings of Grimaldi's manuscript as well as on a rare drawing of Heemskerk), was levelled to the ground. Its bells, one dating from the year 1350, another from 1353, were brought over to the dome on the Gregorian chapel. Their inscriptions are known, but do not strike us like others in much less important places.

The old campanile is mentioned by Grimaldi in his valuable description of the ceremony of placing the cross on the top of the dome of St. Peter's. The death of Sixtus V hindered this Pope from placing "the cross which will greet the pilgrims from afar." But during the reign of Clemens VIII the clergy assembled at the foot of the campanile had the joy of witnessing their seven daring colleagues—canons of St. Peter's—who, garbed in the dalmatica, climbed to the top to be present at the placing of the

cross. On the day before, 18th November, 1593, Pope Clemens had placed relics inside the arm of this cross on the high altar of St. Peter's. Thence it was hoisted through the dome while the choir sang the appropriate antiphone:—

“Luce splendida fulgebis et omnes fines terrae adorabunt coram te. Nationes ex longinquo ad te venient et munera deferentes adorabunt Dominum.”

During the service on the following day the principal verse was:—

“Signum salutis pone Jesu Christe super domum istam et non permittas introire angelum percutientem.”

The hymn accompanying this ceremony could not be better chosen. The allusion to the danger of lightning was certainly not out of place!

The lantern and the dome itself have often been struck. (I found the first stroke of lightning which struck the unfinished cupola, mentioned as having happened in July, 1590.) Also to this cause were attributed the mural cracks, which disturbed the peace of the Romans in the year 1743. Fissures had already been observed in the former century, but never inspired so much alarm as in 1743. The rumour went through the city that “the dome of the church was coming down to thank

the foundation for having supported it so long"!

A specialist having been called in by the Pope declared that, if the dome became a menace, the only remedy would be to demolish it. The same man, Marchese Poleni, professor in mathematics at the University of Padua, after a long examination, found a less drastic cure, proposing to surround the dome and its basis with five iron rings; these were afterwards placed there by the famous architect Vanvitelli.

Poleni wrote a book about his investigations in company with Vanvitelli in those high regions. The fear of serious damage had already sent there a number of visitors of all ages and standing—mathematicians, architects, and prelates. The ascent must have been much more difficult then than it is now, the former project of an elevator having only just been realised. (Elevators were in Rome before 1743, as can be seen in the Castel Sant' Angelo, where the shaft and lateral rails of an elevator, dating, I believe, from Leo X, are still shown.)

Our esteem grows for the ascent of persons, who also in ordinary days enjoyed an elevated position memorised in numerous marble tablets grouped along the walls of the staircase now leading to the cathedral's roof, when we realise that their achievement was a hard and dangerous one.

Marchese Poleni and his companion also received a special indulgence from the Pope to walk up certain staircases in St. Peter's, which were destined only for the Canons of the basilica. These stairs, leading to the balconies, were situated in the four immense pillars which carry the dome. The two men passed along the winding staircases, carefully studying those pillars, in order to discover the truth of a suggestion already made in the XVII<sup>th</sup> century that the columns were weakening, especially on account of the four niches opened to receive the gigantic marble statues. This supposition was excluded, and scant attention given to the popular idea that the dome had suffered chiefly from lightning, thunder, earthquakes, and the firing of artillery. The author cleverly observes, when writing about the public interest in his extensive work, that it is the natural inclination of human beings to ponder on important events, even though hardly understood by them, and to suggest remedies for their defects.

Still the influence of exterior causes is admitted, and he suggests that after the death of Michelangelo the work of the drum and basement of the dome having been discontinued for twenty-four years, many unprotected parts of the building became exposed to the inclemency of the weather in this interval, and, as far as is known, decayed considerably.

St. Peter's seems to be the spot where rain



showers make their first entry on reaching the city. At least the Romans look in that direction to prognosticate the weather, as the Florentines watch their Monte Morello.

The changes in the climate of Rome were, like every important aspect of life, brought into relation with papal deeds. And Sixtus V had, according to a writer of the XVII<sup>th</sup> century—the afore-mentioned Ameiden—his share in its variability, but, for the rain clouds towering behind St. Peter's, his predecessors should be made responsible!

Gregorius XIII, in order to be independent of the importation of wheat brought over from the lands of the steady enemies of the Holy See, the Levant, cut down part of the woods between Rome and the sea (placed by the old Romans under the protection of Deities), and converted them into vast plantations. From that moment—always according to the version of the XVII<sup>th</sup> century—the atmospheric condition underwent notable changes. It is true that a bank of hills rises between Rome and the sea. From the Isola Sacra, between Fiumicino and Ostia, no vista of Rome can be had (I am told that seamen discover the dome of St. Peter's from the top of their masts when coasting across the mouth of the Tiber).

Sixtus V, on the contrary, may have accommodated Rome with a larger supply of the benefi-



cent Tramontana (north wind) by destroying woods north of Rome, which were convenient hiding-places for brigands. The author adds the remarkable statement that the heavy rainy weather causes a fatigue which, according to a special study on Roman sicknesses, is felt more by "forestieri" than by those who are born here. Indeed, it is usually the "forestiere" from foreign countries who complains about the effects of the "scirocco" (southern wind).

The consequences of aerial magnetism on the upper part of St. Peter's were usually inspected on the lantern at the top of the dome on the day following a storm. The workmen told Marchese Poleni of numerous cases of lightning flashes which had broken off entire capitals of columns in the time of Bernini.

Baldinucci, one of Bernini's contemporaries and biographers, adduces the lightning storms and their effects on the "highest building in Rome," as a defence against those who would hold him (Bernini) responsible for every crack in the huge mass of brick and stone.

Another source of trouble has been the earthquakes, which occupy a place in the literature about the organic defects of St. Peter's and its dome during the lapse of time. The plaster and mosaics served as an automatic control. A piece of mosaic dropping from the inner cupola, or a crack drawing a more or less capricious line over

the stucco lining of the walls, was always a signal of alarm.

More philosophic minds consoled themselves with the reflection that everything human "under the moon" is bound to deteriorate. Others, inclined to accept the teachings of less abstract views, argued from examples. If the cupola of Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence has endured on a territory so much more prone to earthquakes, why not the younger dome of St. Peter's?

The nearer example of the Pantheon's roof was not ignored. "Time," who is, according to an Italian expression, "such a gentleman," has given right to the optimists. The dome of St. Peter's may need constant attention and occasionally a new coat of lead, but, nevertheless, it defies the fury of the elements, and still remains the best example of the solidity of the work accomplished under the reign of Sixtus V, notwithstanding the great rapidity of its construction.

It seems incredible that this enormous pile should have been erected in less than two years, from the 15th July, 1588, to the 14th May, 1590, even if 800 men worked constantly, often day and night. (800 is the highest number given; some authors state that there were only 600.)

On the 19th May, 1590, the last stone of the dome was placed, during a solemn mass in the church below. This probably means the last stone of the ring, bearing the inscription mentioning

Sixtus V, which was doubtless put there at the very end of his life.

The *Avvisi*, from which I take the above dates, prove to be a precious source of information for the chronology of the cupola, which is more obscure in the printed sources. They tell us, for instance, that on the 8th of August, 1590, the thirty-six columns which support the cupola of St. Peter's were completed. The plan of decorating the interior with mosaics, covering the exterior with lead and gilding the ribs, was already known in Rome on that date. Grimaldi relates that the mosaics were begun in 1598 and completed in the year 1612. The last figure to be finished was the Sanctus Jacobus minor.

In one of the books of Introitus and Exitus in the Vatican Archives I found noted on the 10th July, 1590, an expense of 1000 scudi for the "pavement of the cupola." It sounds strange at first, but is explained by the ingenuous way in which such things were noted in those days. It certainly refers to the pavement of the church under the dome. The relatively small opening high above can have done no harm. Here perhaps the Pantheon again served as a model.

The death of Sixtus V suspended for a while the works in the basilica, except the dome. Not only on the Vatican hill, but over the other seven classic hills, the great impulse given and maintained during his pontificate, lost its power. A look at

his unexecuted plans is as interesting as the scheme of the unwritten book of an author, or a painter's last sketch left on its easel.

The inventory of Sixtus' plans, never executed, contains a direct road from St. John in Lateran to St. Paul outside the walls. The crossing point of the walls would have been marked by a gate near the bastions added to the Roman walls under Paulus III, behind Caracalla's Baths. A much more dangerous proposition was conceived in the stern mind of Sixtus, who had all the practical notions of a reformer of modern cities, but was at times too thorough !

He planned nothing less than the metamorphosis of the Coliseum into a wool factory ! The ever-ready Fontana drew the conception into the cold lines of an architectural ground plan. The basement was to be divided into so many shops for the workmen, who would be chosen from the beggars of the streets. On the first floor they were to have their living-rooms, and a fountain was to be placed in the centre of the famous circus. With this master-stroke the industry of wool-spinning would have been introduced, a problem of public charity solved, and a useless mountain of brick rendered profitable on a large scale !!! The plan would have become a reality if Sixtus had lived till the autumn. The work of levelling the road leading towards the Coliseum from the Tor de' Conti was begun.



The much-quoted *Avvisi* give a few dates. One of their reporters sent the following notes to the Court of Urbino; the first dated April 11th, 1590:—

“On Saturday, as the Pope passed by the Coliseum, he planned to restore that great bulk and make it habitable, and to bring there masters and workmen of the wool industry. . . .”

and the second note soon after, on the 18th of the same month:—

“They are actually working at the Coliseum for the purpose I wrote about, and, to begin with, they are bringing to the level of the street of the Arch of Constantine all the loose earth around that building.”

We have an idea what this loose earth around the Coliseum meant from a drawing reproduced in Egger's edition of the *Codex Escurialensis* (drawings referring to Rome, by a pupil of Ghirlandajo, about 1475). Around the Coliseum are regular dunes where a tribe of gipsies seem to have made their encampment.

The institution of the wool-spinning industry might have proved a failure like the silk industry in Diocletian's Baths.

Concerning the proposal made to Sixtus V by a Jewish contractor in 1589, and Sixtus' Free Trade decree permitting the bringing in of the necessary raw materials with scarcely any taxes, and about



the dangerous epidemic breaking out amongst the silk-workers in 1589, see an article by Tomassetti in the *Studii e Documenti di Storia e Diritto* giving plentiful information.

The mind of the populace must have been somewhat struck by the destructive plans of Sixtus V. The first feeling of alarm was identical with what we see happening everywhere when the reform of a city plan is proposed.

Sixtus' plan for the Coliseum would not have been easily accepted by the Roman population. Even though it had the bad reputation of being haunted (read, for instance, in Benvenuto Cellini's autobiography, his experiences in the Coliseum), the Romans did not want an ominous operation in that neighbourhood. The *vox populi* once stopped an explorer at the base of the Arch of Constantine, accusing him of an intention to undermine it. The distich of the Barberini-Barberi is another world-known instance of the conservative love of the Romans for their Coliseum.

It is even said that other Barbarians, long before the Barberini, schemed to blow it up, and to this day the holes are shown which were made for that purpose.

The name of Sixtus is still in the Roman folklore associated with the Coliseum, and I should not wonder if that story had some connection with his well-intentioned but easily misunderstood plans for the amphitheatrical factory.

Domenico Fontana saw not only this plan but many others frustrated by the death of Sixtus.

His was still the catafalque built temporarily in Santa Maria Maggiore on the occasion of the Requiem mass—*coram corpore*—when the body of his former master was brought there after its ritual year of repose in St. Peter's (August 27th, 1591). It afforded him an opportune moment for bringing forward the great chapters of the Pope's life in which he had played a conspicuous part.

Catafalques are made even now in Italy by foremost artists; that erected to King Humbert in the Pantheon, for instance, was made by the late Sacconi, the architect of the monument for Victor Emanuel II. Sacconi obtained a marvellous effect of light by closing the opening in the roof by a disk suspended so near the aperture, that the light could only glide along its sides.

Fontana made the catafalque in the form of St. Peter's dome, with obelisks, and the columns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius grouped around, and decorated with panels representing other achievements. The whole was a synopsis of the great Pope's life by his architect.

The brilliant Roman period of Fontana's life closed soon after the solemn service in Santa Maria Maggiore.

Historical sources do not shed much light on the circumstances of his final departure from Rome and journey to Naples. However, we have

several analogous cases in the XVII<sup>th</sup> century when artists, fallen into disgrace at Rome, go to Naples as a resource. In Rome they lived under the equator, in Naples under the tropical line of art. The world of Naples was chiefly Spanish, but it cordially received Roman refugees if they showed themselves disposed to make some trifling changes in their style and to adopt grandiose Spanish notions. The Viceroy of Naples considered it a piece of good fortune when he could monopolise in a kindly way an artist renowned in Rome. It was in a milder form the serious question often raised in the XVI<sup>th</sup> century between Italian potentates of Italy about the possession of an artist.

I have put together what information can be found about the sudden change in Fontana's career, hoping that some day this incident may be explained with more detail from documents of which we are now ignorant.

Great authority can be taken from Baglione's *Vite* for the ordinary sources.

Baglione was a contemporary of Fontana, and, as a boy of fifteen, had worked under his leadership at the Vatican Library, and at several other buildings. He handled the brush with a precocious dexterity which attracted the pontiff's attention.

His strenuous life seems to have exhausted his young strength; he went to Naples to restore his

health, and did not return to Rome before the pontificate of Clemens VIII (1592). Perhaps he saw Fontana arrive (at Naples), or they may have passed each other on the road between the two cities.

Afterwards Baglione lost sight of Fontana, stating that he died under Clemens VIII (1592–1605), whereas he outlived Clemens by two years.

Baglione says: “When the Pope (Sixtus V) finally died, the Cavaliere Domenico Fontana was persecuted by some ill-intentioned people, as often happens to those who lose their good opportunities, of which the world is the theatre, but Rome the stage. Therefore he resolved to go to Naples, and was well received by the Viceroy. . . .”

Fontana's own book—in the second edition, with his works after the death of Sixtus V—is very cautious and diplomatic. As the supplement is dedicated to Neapolitan magnates he manifests a complete turning round towards the sun of new favours. Painful points are avoided. Gathering some facts from his own declaration, we see that he was still labouring for Clemens VIII at the bridge over the Tiber at Borghetto. He says that he was summoned by the Viceroy, and speaks about his brother Giovanni Fontana (a specialist in water-engineering, who did a great deal for the Tiber and the beautiful lake of Piediluco behind Terni), and his cousin Maderna, papal architect



after him, as if they were designated by himself as his regular successors.

But against him, or at least against this smooth history of events, we have the words of Bellori, that the appointment as general architect was repealed, bad reports having been made against him, saying that he had embezzled the sums put in his care during the reign of Sixtus V. This storm cannot have broken so soon over his thoughtful head. According to a notary's act "the former architect of Sixtus V" was still in Rome in 1594.

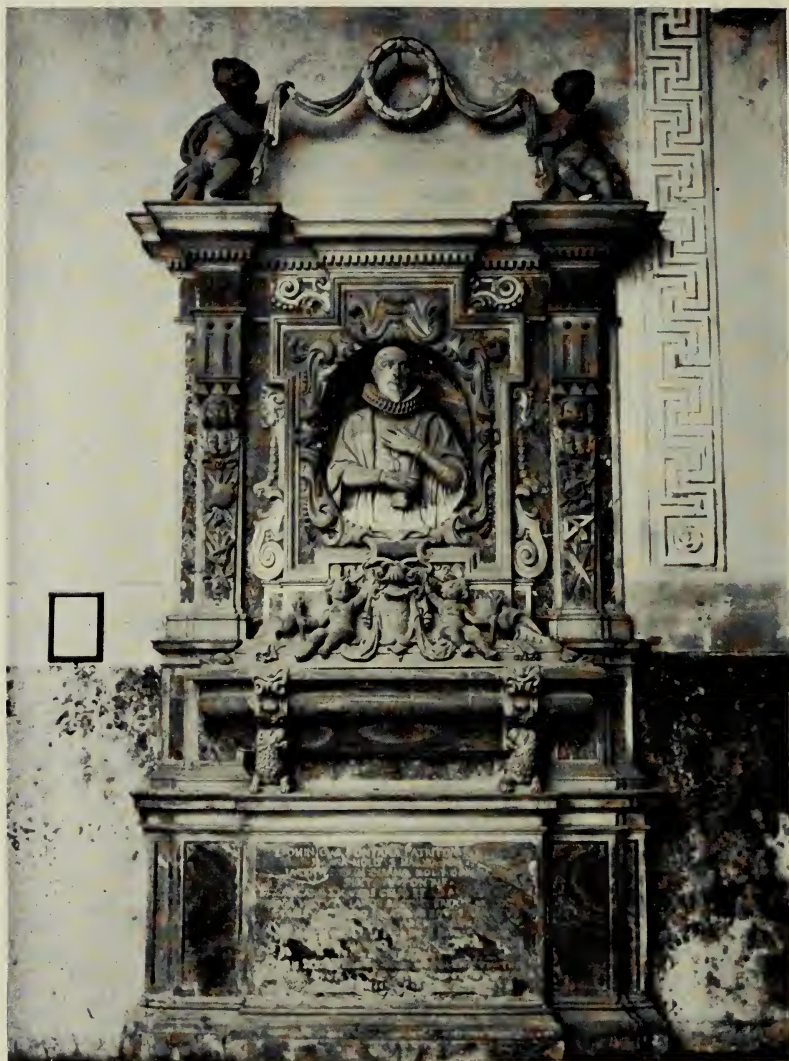
He moved from Rome in 1596, as is shown by a permit to export some art objects from Rome to Naples. Amongst those, as a relic of the closed past, "a bronze obelisk a full arm in length"!

In the year 1596 he designed the catafalque for the Requiem mass, in Naples, for Philip II, King of Spain, in which the dome effect was repeated. The change in his career may have been marked with funereal monuments, but he soon turned to more cheerful tasks.

When printing the supplement of his book in 1603, he was able to enumerate a large list of monuments in Southern Italy, and especially in Naples. He lived down his difficulties, and does not at all seem to have considered his reputation ruined in Rome, as I can prove by a fact unknown to his biographers, even to de Hübner. I discovered it in Grimaldi's manuscript of St. Peter's, where







THE ARCHITECT'S TOMB

Fontana is mentioned among the architects offering their services for the work that was to fall to Carlo Maderna.

In Naples some of the most prominent buildings are Fontana's: the King's palace, the fountain of Neptune, and others. He continued to do for Naples what he had done for Rome.

After his marriage, he continued to live in Naples until his death, which occurred in the year 1607; he left behind him some young children. They did not forget their father's fame; one, indeed, followed in his footsteps. Julius Cæsar (a Roman name!) Fontana was also an architect.

In 1627 a monument was erected by him to his father's memory in Naples.

My readers when passing there might give a glance to the church of Sant' Anna dei Lombardi, in the centre of the city, in the outside portal, just for the sake of our weighty obelisk and Fontana, whom we now leave. There he is:—

“Summus Romæ Architectus”

again with the instruments of his work, with his armoury of obelisk and fountains, and the chain around his neck, and there are real Sixtine lions and . . .

“MAGNA MOLITUS MAJORA POTUIT.”

## V

### THE DESTRUCTION OF THE SEPTIZONIUM

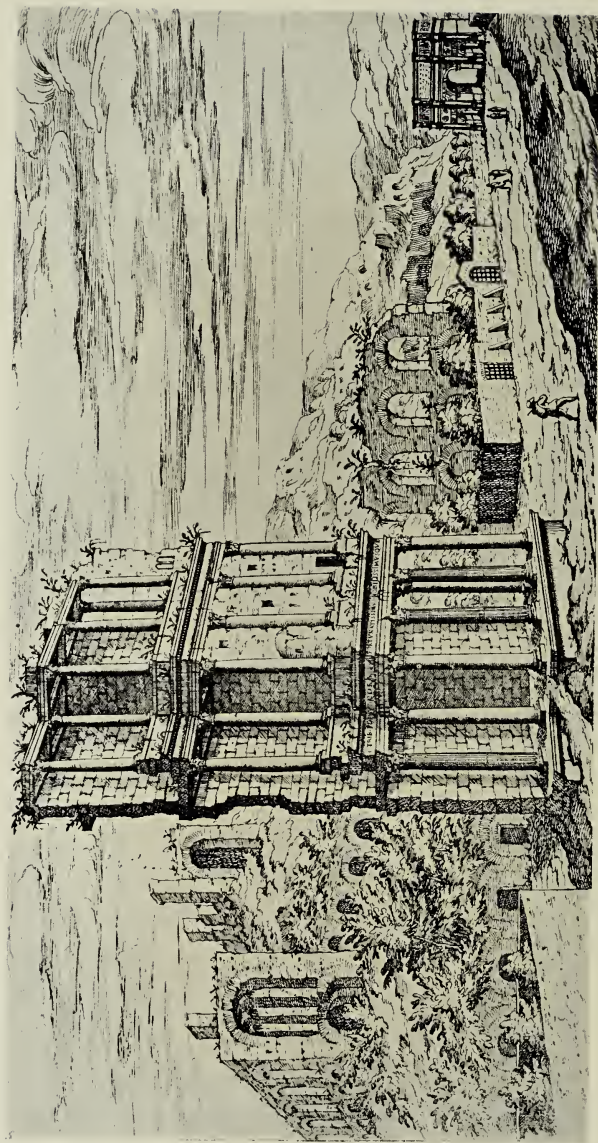
**I**T is only logical that the era of any ruler who transformed Rome should mean "debt and credit" to archæology.

The active archæologist and topographist are always on the alert for occasions when some particle of old Rome is laid bare. A close survey is made by official and amateur inspectors, whenever a corner is lifted of the large sheet of buildings covering the venerable body of Roma Antica. It often causes competition; and sometimes we see the heroes of science engaged in a familiar struggle over the *spolia opima* of an excavation.

As a rule the foreigner is hardly aware of the existence of an intellectual circle in Rome, constantly on the look-out for new data on archæology and topography, which each interference with the soil is apt to bring forward. He does not know that when some important result has become known to the general public it has already lost its fresh interest for the body-







THE SEPTIZONIUM SEVERI.

guards of antiquity. They are seeking in the meantime for the next disclosure ; perhaps a mere fragment, attaining ephemeral notoriety, but, on the battlefield of controversy, a very Patrocles' corpse.

The public, in the widest sense, expect more from excavations than they are capable of yielding. If a cool-minded archæologist would sit down and draw for that same public a scheme of what may eventually be found, and the much greater amount of what certainly is lost for ever, he would meet with very little gratitude for his conscientious task. Fortunately, the point of view of the archæologist and that of the general public offer a great contrast. While the public expects table-silver with the monogram of Cajus Julius Cæsar, the archæologist is made happy by a piece of leaden water-pipe.

Another cruel but very rare truth must be stated ; it is only exceptionally that excavations made with a determined purpose are able to excite public curiosity. Science counts, on the contrary, mostly on the patient collecting of the material brought forth occasionally. In acting so, it only follows an old and recognised track. The enthusiasts who turn away disappointed will return when they understand the conditions better.

As we do not expect to find a group of the Laocoon or the Aldobrandini fresco every century,

even a printed tile acquires some importance. According to its inscription, a scholar's theory stands or falls. A villa foundation emerges from the ocean of things unknown, and a long-fought discussion is ended.

A new street or square is made. At once the emotion of the whole guard awakens. The map is studied anew; portfolios with older plans and boxes with almost forgotten notes are opened. While the grandees of Spain discuss and protest, there is an opening for some ardent and ingenious Columbus.

The best proofs of the passionate interest those studies can awaken are their worst consequences, their falsifications—such as a few marble inscriptions in the museum of Naples, fabricated by Pirro Ligorio in the XVI<sup>th</sup> century.

Under the present regime for protecting antiquities, Sixtus could never have built his Rome; at least his architects would have been limited to a cipher in the choice of materials which they were then allowed to select unhindered.

The first great builder and reformer of the city before Pope Peretti was another Sixtus, the fourth of this name. A bridge, the Ponte Sisto, was called after him, and also a street, naturally called the Via Sistina (now Borgo Sant' Angelo), which is described by Volaterranus, the Roman diarist of his time, as a street paved and named by papal prescription (in the great new edition of the *Rerum*

*Italicarum Scriptores*, 1904, fasc. 26-7, p. 29).

The name Via Sistina now means quite a different street, as every visitor to Rome knows. The internal changes of Roman street-names perplex many who read the descriptions of former centuries. The present Via Leonina, Via Paolina, Via Alessandrina have nothing but their names in common with the streets formerly so called, and now known as: Via Ripetta, Via del Babuino, and Borgo Nuovo. The works of Sixtus IV extend further than the Sixtine Chapel, restorations of several churches, and the care of important thoroughfares for the traffic winding to the Vatican. Still his share in the external lines of Rome is so much smaller than that of Sixtus V that the name of "Sixtine Rome" is only suitable in connection with the latter.

The reigns of those two Sixtus have many points of resemblance connecting them: Sixtus IV in the bloom of the Renaissance, and Sixtus V after its definite end. While the Renaissance was a garden, Sixtus IV handled the plough for future harvests in the acre of practical life. The beautiful scene of Sixtus IV receiving Platina is now a museum object in the Vatican Pinacoteca, while the somewhat dry painting of Pietro Facchetti still looks down on the incessant activity of the library. The Biblioteca, under the care of Platina, holds an historical place in the larger collection still in the building of Sixtus V.



In relation to Ancient Rome, Sixtus IV surpasses the last Pope of this name, and will always be noted as the founder of the Capitoline Museum.

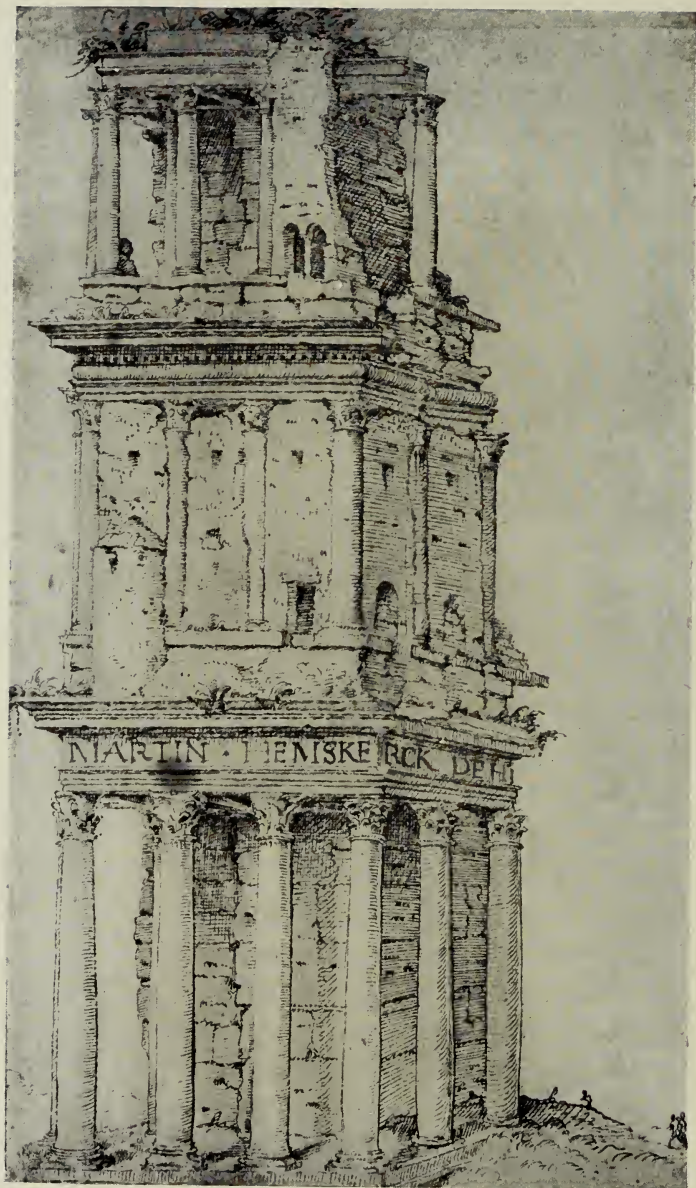
The reign of Sixtus V is marred by the razing of the Septizonium.

It was built by Septimus Severus, a grandiose as well as a solid decorative prospect on the corner of the Palatine "meeting the eye of those who returned from Africa by the Appian Way." In the IV<sup>th</sup> and V<sup>th</sup> centuries it is mentioned in descriptions of Rome, and drawn for the first time on the "Forma Urbis," the magnificent Roman map of the III<sup>rd</sup> century now in the courtyard of the Palazzo dei Conservatori on the Capitoline hill. Again, it is referred to in the *Itinerarium Einsidlense* in the VIII<sup>th</sup> century, and was surely noted on the lost map, for which this *Itinerarium* was the index. (The reconstruction of this map is a *tour de force* such as only a scholar of Hülsen's value could undertake; see his *La pianta di Roma dell' Anonimo Einsidlense*, 1907.)

From the *Itinerarium Einsidlense*, which has engrossed de Rossi, Lanciani and Hülsen, we pass to another monumental publication mentioning this ruin, the *Liber Pontificalis* edited by Monsignor Duchesne, the present director of the French School in Rome. About the year 800 a Christian church, Santa Lucia in Septizonio, nestled in this pagan construction. Where no church was con-







SEPTIZONIUM WITH MEDIAEVAL ELEMENTS.  
(From Heenske's drawing.)

structed in or near ancient buildings the latter often served other purposes ; for instance, the Arch of Constantine was utilised as a fortress. The Septizonium did not escape this fate, and about or around the year 1000 it was fortified and accordingly besieged. In the XII<sup>th</sup> century a Pope fled there for shelter ; an anti-pope was imprisoned there, and the age of Sancta Lucia in Septizonio made it worthy to be a Cardinal's titular church. One of these Cardinals, Brancalone, was once a prisoner there !

The last time when it played an important part was at the time of the entrance into Rome of the Emperor Charles V in 1536. The solemn manner of his arrival occupied the mind and talents of many Italian and some foreign artists. It was arranged that the Emperor should come in after a night's lodging in the monastery of San Paolo Fuori, and reach San Sebastiano by the still existing Via delle Sette Chiese, with its marvellous views of Rome. Then, at the first sharp turn of the Via Appia, inside the wall, where the wide road passed straight through vineyards, he could see on the one hand the "Settesolie," with the ancient buildings of "Palazzo Maggiore" (the Palatine), and on the other the aqueducts and ruins of the Celius ; before him the Arch of Constantine ! This notable pageant is recorded on the frescoed walls of the castle of Caprarola.

We must thank the learned Stevenson for

some abundant information about the last stage of the already ruined building; he enumerates dates and facts from the volumes of the Vatican Library and archives, with the cost of its destruction.

Here it is shown how a pontificate of great constructive activity results in damage to archæology.

It is to be remembered that, long before Sixtus' time, it was the custom to take from ancient ruins materials, such as blocks of ordinary stone, columns, carved marbles, etc., for the building and decoration of new edifices.

Sixtus' architect, Fontana, only followed the usual course when he laid his hand on the Septizonium, a quarry so near to the field of his activity!

The Septizonium was indeed treated like an ordinary quarry, a very typical incident in one of the darkest pages in the history of excavations.

Part of the ancient building was absorbed in the new wing of the Vatican, part in the basement of the obelisk of Piazza del Popolo, in the restoration of Marcus Aurelius' column, and in the chapel of Santa Maria Maggiore, the staircase leading down to the Cappella del Presepio, the festoons of Sixtus V's tomb, and the bas-relief with the coronation of Pius V. "Peperino" from this quarry found a new repository in a staircase and façade of the Lateran Palace, as

well as in the public washing-place for poor women, made by Sixtus near the church of Santa Susanna.

Parts of the Septizonium came into the possession of private individuals; we must also remember that some were employed to the profit of the city's æsthetics. A note by Sixtus V on this subject, published by Bertolotti, reads as follows: "Cavaliere Domenico Fontana, our architect: you will consign to the Conservatori and other representatives of the people of Rome two of the columns, which are taken from the old palace at St. John in Lateran, after your own choice, and you will also give them the metal ball, which was on the top of the obelisk of the Vatican; these objects we give them, to place on the Capitolium at their convenience. And also you will consign to Mutio Mattei five pieces of peperino, which we present to him to use in his fountains in Strada Felice."

This document was dated May 23, 1589, and signed "Sisto V P.P." The palace of Mutio Mattei is now known as Palazzo del Drago; it has undergone changes, and been called, in chronological order: Mattei (built by Fontana), Massimo, Albano, del Drago. The "Quattro Fontane" do not need any explanation.

Domenico Fontana is circumspect in relating his deeds of destruction. "Material provided



by the Pope" does not appear so freely in his book as it did in his buildings. On one page, where he speaks about the Baths of Diocletian, his words are very colourless; we understand this apathy when we read elsewhere that 94,000 cubic metres of their archæological material were used by Fontana. In general he avoids a reference to this delicate question. Anyhow, he did not feel it a duty, which nobody could have fulfilled better than himself, to leave any other report of the Septizonium's destruction than an ordinary business note. An official description, in the style of Grimaldi's manuscript about St. Peter's, is lacking.

Fortunately we can fill out some missing links from the pleasant chain of memoirs left us by Flaminio Vacca (a colleague of Fontana in the art of handling stone), regarding several ancient monuments damaged or destroyed in the days of Sixtus V.

Vacca had his part in Sixtine buildings in the chapel of Santa Maria Maggiore and at the fountain of Moses, and must have been an artist of remarkable talent. His chief occupation was the restoration of antique statues, a work which was, as a rule, not considered beneath the dignity of a sculptor. Even Benvenuto Cellini practised it, accompanying it with a boastful protestation in his own diverting manner. He called the "restorators" by profession "ciabattini" (cobblers), but

nevertheless he stepped into their calling when the opportunity offered. His mortal enemy, Baccio Bandinelli, worked in the same way, restoring the Laocoon. Before this, another Tuscan artist, Verocchio, had made arms and legs for a statue in the Medici collection. How the art of restoring and of sculpture could go side by side is told by Vasari in the life of the sculptor-monk, Giovanni Montorsoli. Montorsoli, after a retreat in Camaldoli, where he used his leisure hours in carving cane-heads for the monks, came to Rome, called by Michelangelo, who had recommended him to Pope Clemens VII (1523-1534). "Having arrived in Rome, he retired to the rooms in the Belvedere which were assigned to him by the Pope for his abode and workroom, and made a missing left arm for the Apollo and a right one for the Laocoon, both of which statues are placed there, also proposing to restore the Hercules. The Pope went nearly every morning to the Belvedere for a walk and to read his breviary. The monk portrayed him in marble so cleverly that his work was much praised, and the Pope conceived a great affection for him. . . ."

In the XVII<sup>th</sup> century, the sculptor Francesco Duquesnoy also made himself a great name by restoring statues with such ability and perfection that people were left wondering where the modern pieces were added. This kind of work must often have aided sculptors in their careers,

by supplying them with funds for costly independent works of art, as is told about Alessandro Algardi.

Flaminio Vacca outstripped all those excellent men on one point: he had such profound interest in his profession, that he took the trouble to write down all interesting excavations and other events of archæological significance.

In a modest way, he has his place amongst the numerous Italian artists who have left books about their profession, their lives, and their art. His modesty is mentioned in a peculiar form on his tombstone in the Pantheon: "Flaminio Vacca, Roman sculptor, who, in his works, never satisfied himself."

His interest in archæology had, it must be owned, sometimes a commercial side. He does not keep that a secret, but remarks on it himself.

The *Memorie di Flaminio Vacca*—published as a supplement to the *Roma Antica* of Nardini—are dated Rome, 1594. This is their final term, but they embrace a long period, recalling to mind even the days of his father. They are spiced with fragrant anecdotes. Vacca was a good talker. Many times, when he opens with his *Mi ricordo*, he remembers delicious incidents of his life in connection with marble and travertine old and new. Then there are many short chapters, imbued with woeful tales of destructions, such as that of the

Septizonium, only usually on a smaller scale. New constructions and discoveries of ancient remains go hand-in-hand in his notes, as when he mentions some traces of the benches of the Stadium of Domitianus—half of it now Piazza Navona, still indicated in the semicircle of houses at the end—under a house near Piazza Madama; or discoveries at Quattro Fontane. On Piazza Colonna, when digging the foundations of a house, an old pavement of marble was found. Vacca supposes that this was the ancient pavement of the square.

Many incidents of Vacca's times bring home to us ordinary facts of the present.

Then, as now, the exigencies of agriculture found an obstacle in the bulky masses of ancient structure. The owner of a plot of ground having decided to utilise his property, one of his first acts is the removal of the impediment. The fate of antique remnants accidentally discovered depends, therefore, on the character and culture of this man and on outside circumstances.

Some of the men whom Vacca refers to can for ever be quoted as models of exploratory courage. Take, for instance, the excavator who lowered himself down into a pit in the Campagna, a mile beyond Monte del Grano (the Monte del Grano is just outside Porta Furba). Or another, a diver by profession, who, at the bottom of the Tiber, found a headless Consul holding some papers in his hand



—an experience which surpasses the terrors of imagination.

For the moment, a short way to locate and to date Vacca's *Memorie* is to employ the well-known "Forma Urbis," the atlas in which modern and ancient Rome, with fragments now in the Capitoline Museum, are included together. It gives at the same time the principal excavations and topographical discoveries for Sixtine Rome. Nobody will regret the hours spent with those splendid maps which enclose the knowledge of whole libraries. Reference to Vacca's memoirs yields much pleasure. You will find Vacca's name mentioned several times on these maps at the Marmorata and at the opposite bank of the Tiber, in the Via Aurelia Antica and the Via Merulana, etc.

Discoveries of antique remains are mentioned on this map at San Giovanni Decollato (1588); on the road behind the Arch of Constantine those of Matteo da Castello, the unhappy architect who endeavoured to bring the Acqua Felice to Rome; on the Monte Calvarello, near the Porta San Sebastiano (1588) and before San Clemente—where the side door still shows some elements of the Sixtine coat of arms—and between this church and St. John in Lateran.

Sixtus made this section of the road, and at the same time dealt a deadly blow to the legend of the "Papessa Giovanna" (the woman Pope).

The legend of "Papessa Giovanna" places her



as a successor to Leo IV, who died in 855. The dramatic end of her life, which has kept the story-tellers busy from Boccaccio to the popular poet Gioacchino Belli (an article of M. Besso in the *Rivista di Roma*, 1907, dwells on her fame in literature), is said to have happened in the street between San Clemente and San Giovanni, during the *possesso*, the solemn occupation of the Lateran, reached after a long procession from St. Peter's. Baronius, the great ecclesiastical writer of Sixtus' times, and even later, took up the question from the historical side, followed in the XIX<sup>th</sup> century by Döllinger, who has uprooted this, as well as other *Papstfabeln des Mittelalters* (mediæval fables about the Popes).

The locality of this startling occurrence is due to a reason of true folkloristic character. Often a legend starts from simple factors, which at once rouse a question in the popular mind. In the *possesso* the Pope and his procession, instead of going straight from the Coliseum to St. John in Lateran, turned off at San Clemente towards SS. Coronati, and from there led towards his basilica San Giovanni in Laterano. This sudden turn in the road must have been caused by its condition, which probably did not allow the continuance of a straight line. Once the itinerary was established, even an improvement of the street's condition could not easily modify the accepted custom. The conservatism, which is usual in rites and

ceremonies, guarantees this version. But the crowds gathered for the impressive *possesso* centuries after the death of Leo IV, observing with intense emotion the election of a Pope and his first official action, wanted an explanation, and began searching for the obstacle which the new pontiff provided for their imagination in his Via Sacra.

It is supposed that an innocent statue, mentioned in the neighbourhood of San Clemente as early as 1283, originated this trouble.

Histories told about the "Boy with the Thorn" (the "Fedele," now in the Capitoline Museum), "Madama Lucrezia," the "Abbate Luigi," "Marforio," and "Pasquino" prove how various and complicated legends arise from statues in public places. Who knows what quaint lore will come from the Legislators before the new Palace of Justice? Already the Roman *popolani* with their vivid fancy seek for some interpretation of their gestures and attitudes. In a few generations the jests of to-day will form a chapter in the popular literature of Rome.

The whole story of the "Papessa Giovanna" may have come from some part of a street, which did not belong to the *possesso* or the statue located there. We are sure of the fact that Sixtus rendered the road practicable, and took away the obstacle, whilst he abolished other old customs of the *possesso*.

A writer of Roman history, Tomassetti, diverging from the supposition that Sixtus may have destroyed the inscription (consisting in P.P.P.P.P.P.), but not the statue, has hunted in Roman collections and believes to have found it in a "Juno with the young Hercules" in the Museo Chiaramonti in the Vatican (in Amelung's Catalogue, Reproduction 48).

The facts adduced by Tomassetti in his article—in the *Bollettino della Commissione Archeologica Comunale*, 1907—that one of Sixtus' near successors, Clemens VIII, ordered away the effigy (!) of this legendary woman, Agnese, Giliberta, or Giovanna, born in England, educated in Athens, etc. etc., from the series of the Popes in the cathedral of Siena, corroborate his supposition.

But to accept the statue in the Vatican, so well preserved after an exposure of centuries in the desert, sufficient foundation seems to be lacking.

Until the regular history of the excavations reaches the period of the reign of Sixtus V, we are without authoritative sanction on this subject.

The connection between Sixtine works of transformation and archaeological discoveries is indicated on the pages of the "Forma Urbis," which contain the surroundings of Santa Maria Maggiore, dated and sometimes further illustrated by the *Memoirs* of Vacca. I take a few examples: While some excavations were taking place at SS. Pietro e Marcellino in the Via Merulana, strong walls were

found resting on blocks of travertine. Vacca (Mem. 24) infers that it was a "Castrum Aquæ," a reservoir, with an aqueduct going towards the Coliseum. Its stone was used in Sixtine buildings. Inside they also found statues, one of which was bought by Cardinal Alessandro Montalto. According to the "Forma Urbis" this Cardinal made, in 1588, some excavations of his own before SS. Giovanni e Paolo. In that same interesting corner of Rome, and in the same year, more excavations are mentioned in the Via di San Gregorio. As to the new streets, we find, for instance: "Great excavations by Sixtus V, 1587," in the Via Panisperna, with a derivation in the present Via Balbo. As an instance of excavations in relation to new buildings, we have to note those at Santa Maria delle Grazie, built in 1588 by a hermit from Calabria for an image of the Madonna, brought from Constantinople to that spot at the foot of the Vatican.

Sixtus V surely followed with interest the proceedings for the protection and to the damage of archæology. We have heard about his walks with Fulvio Orsini, and, amongst the books of his private library, we find one by Marlianus about Roman antiquities. The author, a remarkable person, pursued his studies between 1534 and 1544. He dealt largely in antiques, a path never apt to help the career of an archæologist, and in his case not a source of comfort, as he lived in



continuous fright of being robbed. His work has had the honour of a French edition (in Lyons) under the supervision of the great French writer Rabelais, who had been in Rome in 1534. One of Marlianus' successors in our days says about him that "he had a modern intuition for topography, and a remarkable talent for expressing much in a few words," quoting his comparison of the Monte Testaccio with a cucumber!

An edition of Marlianus' topography came out in Rome in 1584, just before the accession of Sixtus V, printed by Antonio Blado in Campo de' Fiori. It is pleasant to handle this book, living in thought in Sixtine times, and realising that, though a repetition, it must have been a novelty at that time. Many probably walked around with a copy of the book in their pockets, to see what Fontana and his Vandals would destroy next. I should not wonder if, in some library, a copy might be found with handwritten notes mentioning the destructions one after the other. Who knows if, on the contrary, Fontana did not consult it as an inventory of "archæological material"? It must have shocked him when he came to the page where Marlianus begins: "We are sitting in the Pope's library . . ." The library had changed in the meantime, or at least Fontana guessed that the proposition would be brought forward. But also times had changed, and we might ask if, in the new building, learned



men would sit so quietly when subjects of Roman topography were brought forward? A certain restraint must have made them change their theme!

Doubtless another, much smaller, book about Roman antiquities came into the hands of the Pope. It was dedicated to him and written by a Frenchman, Louis de Montoise (Demontiosius), printed in 1585 in Rome, at the very beginning of the pontificate, according to the date of the "permit to print": July, 1585 (in an index of the Vatican Archives). He gave his book a nice short title: *Gallus Romæ hospes* (a Frenchman, the guest of Rome). But his concise style would have disgusted musty bookworms, so, for their benefit, he explained almost in the same breath that it was a book "in which many old monuments are explained and partly given back their original form."

The copy which I admired in its integrity and splendid print not only shows the Sixtine coat of arms inside, but also in gold, printed on the binding of the cover. Perhaps it was de Montoise's copy, which he himself offered to the new sovereign, he being a man of distinction, passing his time as "a guest of Rome" in the house of a Cardinal.

Instinctively, I sought along the pages for the Septizonium, tracing perhaps the fingers of Sixtus V, and never feeling so near to the far past, or to

the great Pope, resting since centuries in his mausoleum in Santa Maria Maggiore.

Perhaps the death-sentence of the Septizonium is contained here, where the author says that "the populace inscribed the Septizonium to Virgil, like most things which pass their understanding." This memorandum, put into the jaws of the terrible Lion of Montalto, could not miss its effect.

When the sentence had been executed in a peremptory form, Sixtus went in person to see that the "antiquities" were levelled to the ground.

The man who described the event of the day, September 4th, 1588, adds that "the destruction of the Septizonium caused general displeasure, as it was such a model of architecture that the talented and very famous architect, Bramante, when he was in Rome, said that he had not seen anything there from which the said art could take more exquisite examples than from the Coliseum and from these Settezonie."

Nevertheless the public will did not possess enough force to change the Pope's decision. The general discontent was a mere circumstance.

Revenge on Sixtus' destruction was to come much later, in the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, with a kind of retaliation, when other public works for the new quarters called for the destruction of his own villa between 1873 and 1888. The only reminders are a few cypresses in the garden

of the Collegio Massimo, near the central railway station, and some frescoes, taken from the walls of the former Villa Peretti and preserved in a room of the College.

We have now heard of one destruction after another, but we have also quoted several instances where Rome did not welcome them.

Real love for ancient buildings in the time of Sixtus V can be deduced from a quantity of facts which were universal in the second half of the XVI<sup>th</sup> century.

A regular exposition of these points would require a volume apart, treating of the Roman collections of that period.

Just a walk through Rome with a contemporary of Sixtus, who noted the principal collections, may be interesting to the reader. The report of that walk, a kind of note-book, is preserved in the former Barberini Library (now in the Vatican). The author has remained anonymous. In the learned world he is known as "the anonymous author of the Barberini MS.," the latter having been published in the *Review* of the Roman Historical Society, as already mentioned in the preceding chapter.

He starts his tour of observation where there now is a sudden turn in the Via Nazionale, at the house of an antiquarian, who glorified his profession in a long inscription on the façade. (This advertisement in more or less literary

form dated from the year 1546!) He just touches upon the collections of the Capitoline Museum, but compensates for his lack of details by a description of frescoes, destroyed under Sixtus V, but left in the works of d'Arpino as an inspiration.

He mentions numerous statues in a palace of the Via Giulia, the Palazzo formerly called Capodiferro, now Spada. The name of their deceased owner is preserved in the actual Via Capodiferro. The indication of the author, "between the Trinità and the Piazza del Duca," means the Trinità dei Pellegrini and . . . I leave it to my reader to find this piazza. He cannot miss it, and will gain not a little knowledge respecting Roman topography, and see, meanwhile, a palazzo which he will not easily forget.

Then our XVI<sup>th</sup>-century guide comes to the Palazzo Savelli and the Theatre of Marcellus. The richest Roman collection after the Belvedere in the Vatican was housed there. In the same neighbourhood, on the forbidden square of the Palazzo Cenci, he will see the funereal stone, recently interpreted for me by a real Roman, as marking the grave containing the pet dog of "la bella Beatrice Cenci"!

The treasures of the Medici villa are prominent in his description. The Cardinal had already doffed the purple robe and married; but, as a Grand Duke, continued his passion for the antique,



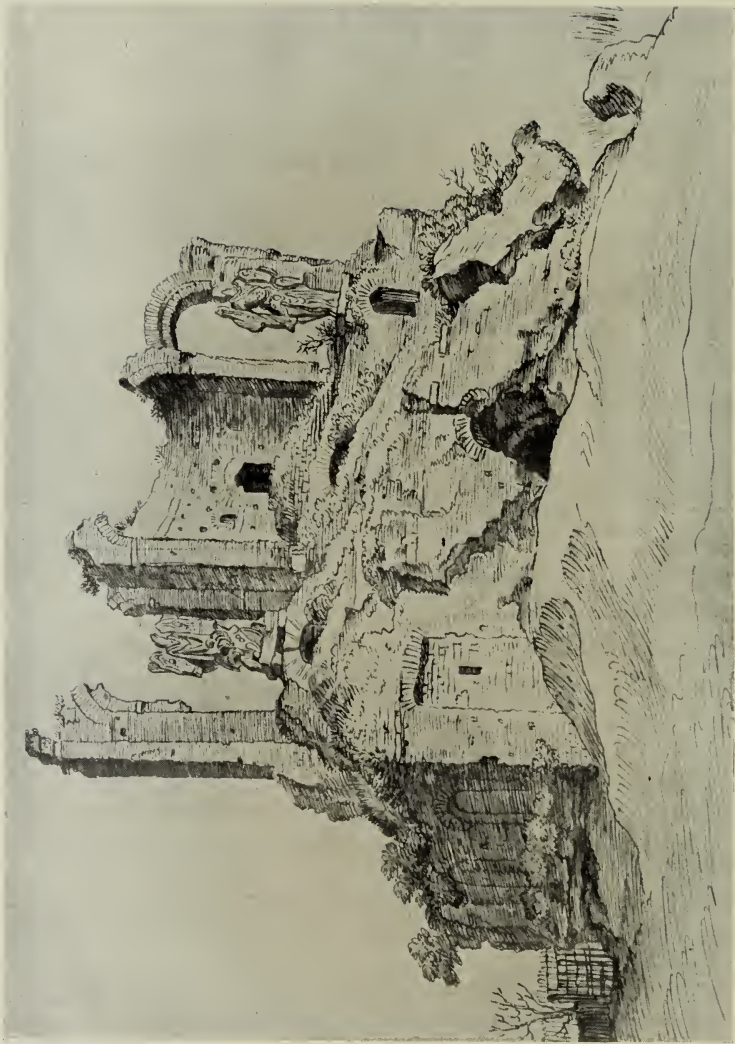
demonstrated by a long correspondence and numbers of permits issued to export statues from Rome to Florence in his times. Vacca repeats in his memoirs the expression: "the desire often satisfied of the Granduca Ferdinando." The statues in the villa on the Pincio were still reposing there when the "anonimo Barberiniano" made his tour. He speaks, for instance, about the famous "Man sharpening a Knife," now in Florence, a well-known piece of realistic sculpture. It went there only in the year 1677. The real removal from Rome to Florence of all portable marbles took place between 1780 and 1788.

The next collection is in the Palazzo Cesi in the Borgo, near the Inquisition. Cardinal Cesi lived there after his retirement from political affairs. The Anonymous also refers to the Belvedere in the Vatican, and extends his researches to the usual "tomb of Nero," and much farther to Oriolo Romano and Civita Castellana—facing the dangers of the outskirts of Rome before Sixtus V's times, when passing through that most lonesome, but, perhaps, most majestic of all highways . . . the Via Cassia, winding towards Casale la Giustiniana.

In Rome itself he could have done better with the fine villa collections on the Quirinal hill, especially the Orti Carpensì, Orti Estensi or Giardino del Cardinale Ferrara; most probably the







THE TROPHIES OF MARIUS : ORIGINAL SITE  
*(From a drawing by Brill.)*

gardens had already been divided by the excavations for the Via Sistina, and their splendid collections dispersed. The Quirinal hill from that side was to be invaded by intruding houses and palaces, and was, under Sixtus V, certainly more a field of activity for architects and engineers than the spot of peace and delight described about thirty years before by Ulisse Aldovrandi.

Sixtus V deserves a better fate than to pass to posterity with the reputation of a mere destroyer.

We will see that he destroyed in order to build and not only to use old stones for new fabrics. Let us summarise the monuments which Sixtus saved from demolition for their own sake: the "Dioscuri" of the Quirinal, and the "Trophies of Marius."

On the Quirinal, a public open-air museum of modest proportions stood throughout the Middle Ages competing with the collections of the Lateran.

Both collections eventually wandered to the Capitoline hill as ornaments, or to be safely deposited in the museum. The Quirinal square—offering a gorgeous view of Rome, which strikes the visitor at his first arrival—had been made more regular in its shape long before Sixtus V.

A map of the middle of the XVI<sup>th</sup> century already roughly outlines its present form. On the top, lying and standing about, could be

seen the statuary which remained stranded there when the glory of the neighbouring Baths of Constantine and of the *Templum Solis* sank in the ocean of time. The characteristic note of the place was given by the Dioscuri and their damaged steeds. The word "horse," or even "marble horse," is a denomination for the whole neighbourhood of "Montecavallo." Roman barons and churches kept it in their name.

When Sixtus, continuing his *Porta Furba* programme, reached the Montecavallo on the Quirinal and found this strange collection, he must have decided at once to bring some system into this chaos.

First of all he wished to become the owner of the place. In April, 1587, the news spread in Rome that the Camera Apostolica had bought Montecavallo from the Caraffa family. The money was sent by a draft from two Roman bankers to the residence of Francesco Caraffa, duca d'Andria, in Naples, and accounted for in the *Introitus et Exitus* of that year, now in the Vatican Archives. On April 16th, 1588, it is recorded that "the square on top of Montecavallo has been lowered by order of the Pope in order to bring to it a branch of the *Acqua Felice*, and to place there a very handsome fountain, taking away all the ugly features which disfigure the beautiful place." And on July 9th, 1588: "the Pope ordered the pulling down of several houses in the square of Monte-

cavallo on the right hand, as far as the wall of the Colonna, to make it more spacious for the Court, for Consistories and other public ceremonies.”

I translate those short notices from the Italian original in a manuscript of the former library of Urbino. They have, as far as I know, never been used, and give besides exact dates about the early beginnings of the work on Montecavallo, also an explanation of Sixtus V's intentions, until now only conjectured from a rare print. Giovanni Guerra, one of the staff of Sixtine painters, displayed in this print an arrangement of the horses which would have made of Montecavallo a counter-piece of the Fountain of Moses. In all the plans the position with regard to the street coming from Porta Pia remained the same, the obelisk appearing only in 1787, the basin and fountain in 1818.

The best known reports on the changes of “Montecavallo” are a “Memoria” by Vacca and an account published by the zealous archivist Bertolotti. Vacca was not only present, but, according to a note in a Vatican manuscript which I am about to publish, was, together with his colleague Egidio della Riviera, called in as an expert before the final payment was made. Important, even decisive documents, have been brought forward by noted scholars, amongst them Michaelis, the writer of so many interesting articles about



Roman collections, and lately of a book on excavations in general.

Heemskerk cuts the Gordian knot. A print and drawing of this artist, to whom archæology is so indebted, are a revelation in a much-discussed situation. Another print, by Lafréry, cautiously used, is also called in as testimonial. From the various sources the following principal facts result: that in the mediæval foundations of the Dioscuri a little house was built, and that the horses were badly damaged, especially one of them, which had to be placed in a studio and completed with marble extracted from the old pedestal, which also furnished material for the new base. The prints, Vacca's note, and numerous æsthetic reasons have started a long and learned controversy on the original arrangement of the giants and horses. The argument lies outside my programme. My readers will find in other publications every possible arrangement of the men and horses studied at length, and will form their own opinion about this archæological puzzle.

On the Capitoline were placed in the last year of Sixtus V's reign the so-called "trophies of Marius," taken from an old reservoir of the Aqua Julia, still in the square Vittorio Emanuele. I reproduce here a drawing (from the National Print-room in Rome, by kind permission of its director, Dr. Hermanin), probably by Bril, to whom it is ascribed in the print by Caylus, show-

ing the "trophies" still in their place. The owner of the spot, Orazio Savelli, asked in 1592 permission to demolish what was left in his villa, "Palombara," near Sant' Eusebio. The City Council discussed his request, and decided to send two commissioners to investigate. Rodocanacchi, who tells this in his beautiful book *Le Capitole Romain Antique et Moderne* (lately, as a worthy pendant, he published a similar French book about the Castel Sant' Angelo), does not refer to the result of the mission. We can imagine that it was a refusal, as the ruins are still there with their magic gate next to them.

In decorating the Capitoline hill with those marbles, Sixtus V continued the work of his predecessor, who placed at the top of the staircase the two groups of Dioscuri. Gregorius XIII had also erected the campanile in its present form. Sixtus took away a statue from the top of the tower, not admitting that a pagan statue should have a higher place than the bells! The fountain and the higher basin in the front of the palace of the Senators were made under Sixtus V. The unhappy architect of the Acqua Felice, Matteo di Castello, made the plan, most probably making use of the ideas of Michelangelo, the scenographer of the Capitoline hill. The Pope sent Matteo's project to the City Council (1588). An animated discussion followed, and the matter was treated again in a public session as the debates against

the opponents, who desired first to see the water and then to make the fountain, could come to no end. The conclusion was, as could be foreseen, deference to the papal desire. This submission was more or less compulsory. After the death of Sixtus, sharp criticisms were uttered against the Pope by the same body. Whatever touches the Capitoline hill is apt to arouse questions in Rome; lately a universal protest has met the proposal to unite the three Capitoline palaces for reasons of opportunity. Opposition rallied under the powerful cry, "Do not touch Michelangelo!"

Sixtus V had during his life a statue on the Campidoglio. It was placed there in March or April, 1587. The inscription praised him as destroyer of brigands, restorer of public buildings, maker of roads, of an aqueduct, etc. The custom of thus honouring the reigning Popes was not an old one, and indeed marked a new chapter in the history of the struggle between the city representatives and the powerful sovereigns on the papal throne. In the minutes of the meetings preserved in the Capitoline archives we find serious discussions by the assembly concerning this form of recognition of favours and privileges. The human mind is naturally opposed to honouring the living in a superlative shape of life-size statues. Something warns us that the limits even of flattery are passed. A ruler in a marble or bronze figure easily becomes a tyrant.

During the XVI<sup>th</sup> century, the custom endured without objections. Leo X, Paul III, Gregorius XIII, and Sixtus V had their statues in the Palazzo de' Conservatori in their lifetimes. The death of Sixtus V marked for a moment a change of opinion. Fearing a violent outburst of the Roman population, hurrying to the Capitoline hill to destroy Sixtus' statue the very day after his decease, the City Council ordered the statue to be covered with boards, whilst solemnly forbidding the erection of statues of living Popes. This ultimatum was put in a clever form: "Whoever would propose such a thing in secret or public gatherings would be infamous and ineligible to fill a place in the Capitoline offices." The insinuating flatterer who might try the proposal for the sake of his own notoriety was thus frustrated.

They wished to bind themselves by making their firm decision public, and kept it continually before their eyes, engraved in a marble plate on the wall of the room with the *Fasti Consulares*. In the middle of the XVII<sup>th</sup> century the inscription was still there. The law which enacted the good intentions of the City Council was abolished by Urbanus VIII in 1634, as this stern edict had not hindered the authorities from ordering and mounting the statues they dedicated to themselves in 1590. Between 1590 and 1600 several figures were made of war heroes and Popes. Clemens VIII



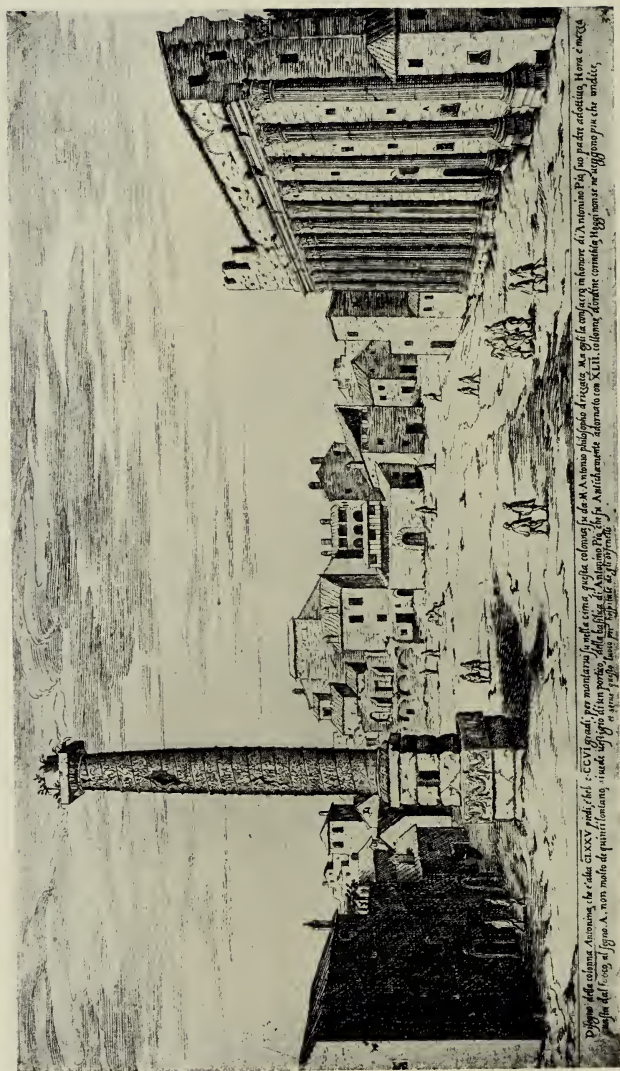
had to content himself with a new head on the statue of Paulus IV, once decapitated by the Roman population. Under the new regime, about 1876, most of the statues were removed to the old church of the Roman Senate, Ara Coeli. Sixtus' statue, till the middle of the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century, in the Palazzo de' Conservatori, has probably made the same ascent, and perhaps gone a little farther, to the monastery of his order, which he may have revisited in effigy. I do not know where the statue has gone since the works for the Vittorio Emanuele monument have totally changed the surroundings and taken the place of the extensive buildings attached to the church. As a work of Taddeo Landini, the artist of the "Fontana delle Tartarughe," this statue must have been of some value.

Other remembrances of Sixtus V on the Capitoline hill—evidently less dear to him than some of the others—are limited to a doorway in one of the palaces bearing his name; an inscription, seen by Forcella, a collector of Roman inscriptions, mentioning that the prison there had been made more pleasant and more spacious, and another inscription, still there, on the back of the Trofeo di Mario. During the reign of Sixtus a bronze copy had been made of Marcus Aurelius' horse to be sent to France for a king's monument.

Tempesti, in his laborious *Vita di Sisto Quinto*,







COLUMN OF MARCUS AURELIUS BEFORE ITS RESTORATION.

tells us of one more Sixtine deed on the Capitoline hill—a Minerva changed into a “Roma Christiana” by the metamorphosis of her lance into a cross. In the same place he alludes to an intention ascribed by some writers to Sixtus V to demolish the tomb of Cecilia Metella. The attempt on this world-known antique, planned by private individuals, was arrested by public protest, and the most typical landmark of the Roman Campagna escaped the fate of serving as a quarry for “material provided by the Pope.”

The religious purposes of Sixtus V could find a better vent than the transformation of pagan antiquities, using them, as happened already with the Vatican obelisk, as a monumental support for the cross, and at the same time to induce important streets to become frequented by the inborn forces of the city’s development.

Not only the obelisks, but even the columns of Marcus Aurelius and of Trajan became in this way pedestals for Christian images.

The writers of Sixtus’ own time noted this characteristic of Sixtine building enterprises. Pietro Galesino, in his life of Sixtus V—still in manuscript—lays great weight on this conversion of pagan into Christian monuments. Another contemporary, who is specially pleased with the travesty of the Minerva, says that “the very holy crosses on the tops of obelisks and statues of the apostles on columns cancel the memory of the old

idolatry . . . as also the cross placed in the hand of the statue on the tower of the Campidoglio, meaning Rome, shows us that nowadays Roma, viz. the Pope, does not wield the sword to subjugate the world, like the infidel Roman emperors, but lifts up the cross to shed a salutary light on the universe."

The Vatican obelisk was the model for the three others erected under Sixtus V. The religious ceremonies which took place when the cross was placed aloft, and the institution of special indulgences for those who would in passing render obeisance to it, were identical at San Giovanni in Laterano, Santa Maria Maggiore, and on Piazza del Popolo.

The obelisk on the Lateran square was found by chance on the 15th of February, 1587, in the area of the former Circus Maximus. The lucky discoverer was rewarded with 300 scudi. The enormous block of red granite was broken in three pieces and sunk deep in the marshy ground, whilst next to it was another obelisk, transported later to the Piazza del Popolo. Fontana set five hundred men to work; three hundred of them were busy day and night keeping back the water which poured from many streams on all sides.

It may have been a rivulet, the ancient Aqua Crabra (Marrana), which, unmolested, had filtered through the earth and still runs swiftly along the new archæological boulevard. In the XVII<sup>th</sup> cen-

tury, the rare element attracted the attention of the higher authorities, and was given in care of the St. John in Lateran chapter, with strict injunctions not to obstruct the leaping course of this "goat stream." Even by Cicero we are told of this brook. In the Middle Ages this water passed through the Circus Maximus at a place called "Scivolenti." Adinolfi, in his book *Roma nell' età di mezzo*, one of the worst written books ever published in Italy, does not explain this name; but we know from other sources that it means those sloping stairs used also for mules, like the access to the Capitoline hill.

The obelisk of the Circus Maximus is the highest in Rome. Fontana had occasion to become acquainted with its huge size and enormous weight when he transplanted the three pieces along the Septizonium towards the square; he does not specify the itinerary, only saying that the road was a mile long, always ascending and jagged, which description corresponds to any one of the ways between the spot near the Septizonium and the present place of the obelisk.

The two obelisks found in the Circus presented that peculiarity that they were not perfectly square. For the second one, Fontana observes its fine position—on the Piazza del Popolo—in the visual ray of so many streets: the Via Flaminia, coming from Ponte Molle, "which on both sides has very beautiful palaces and vineyards, and, inside the



Porta del Popolo, the handsomest entrance to Rome."

Via Flaminia outside Porta del Popolo was, at the end of the XVI<sup>th</sup> century, the fashionable drive, as is nowadays the Pincio in winter and the Villa Umberto in the late spring. During the last years of Gregorius XIII's reign it was not perfectly safe there. A monsignore, brother of a Cardinal, driving on that promenade in his own carriage, had been killed by four brigands at a crowded hour of the day!

The smallest of the obelisks, that of Santa Maria Maggiore, was found severed in many pieces, its point also missing, near San Rocco—probably coming from the mausoleum of Augustus. Another obelisk from the same neighbourhood was erected in 1781 by Pius VI in a Sixtine monument—between the Dioscuri of Montecavallo.

From a Vatican manuscript I take the unedited note that Sixtus had intended to put two obelisks in the Piazza di Agona (Piazza Navona); to place in the Piazza delle Terme Diocleziane "the great and beautiful column now in the ruins of the Campo Vaccino (Forum Romanum) called Templum Pacis, with a statue of the Madonna." Certainly this means the column of the Constantine basilica, which has served for this project of Sixtine origin.

Instead of moving other shafts of marble or granite, Sixtus thought of utilising two existing

stately "pedestals," the column of Marcus Aurelius and that of Trajan.

The combination crossed the pontifical mind in the straight line of his ideas for the conversion of pagan monuments, by placing on the summit of the columns of the great emperors statues of the two foremost apostles.

Fontana states in his report, that "the column of the supreme and best of all Emperors should be dedicated to Petrus the prince of the Apostles, and that of the Emperor-philosopher Marcus Aurelius to the philosophic Apostle Paulus."

We have no right to think that any action of Sixtus V in Christianising ancient Rome was conceived without meditation. High above the palaces would appear the images of the patron saints of the Eternal City!

The column of Marcus Aurelius was in very bad condition. The City Council repeatedly held discussions on the subject, and more than once sent commissioners to the spot to judge the danger. It remained for Sixtus V, with the ever-resourceful Fontana, to save the column from sure ruin. The busy architect does not waste much space in his report on the story of this restoration, stating that the Colonna Antonina was, partly by age, and partly having been burnt by the Barbarians, reduced to such a state that it seemed impossible rather than difficult to restore it. Wide cracks went across the surface, which also offered alarming

holes. Fontana made a circular scaffold to the top, and added in the open spaces pieces of marble with figures carved in the style of the long winding procession. Authentically it is not certain that the metal for the gilded St. Paul on the top came from an antique pilaster of the Pantheon. In the manuscript of short notices about current events (Urb. Lat. 1055), I found that the material was sought for all over Rome, and, from a suggestion there, I gather that the bronze doors of Sant' Agnese at least incurred the risk of vanishing in the mighty metal shape of the apostle Paulus.

The restorations made by Sixtus V were satisfactory. Hübner did not believe it. He declares that the column was completely taken down in the end of the XVII<sup>th</sup> century to undergo a new restoration. This *fait presque oublié*, as he calls it, has been furnished to him by an engraving of 1696 in the Print-room in Paris, representing the square without the monument. It startles us to think that an historian of Hübner's standing could commit such a mistake, His *lapsus calami* makes us forget the engraver who was the first culprit, and who was surely not very capable in his profession! Nobody could call such an omission merely a careless disregard for details. . . .

In October, 1588, the column was solemnly inaugurated. A patriarch, after celebrating mass in San Lorenzo, headed a procession to the square, accompanied by the papal singers, to bless the

column with its statue. Probably here also the column was first exorcised, according to a note of Alaleone's diary, as happened before, in November, 1587, for the column of Trajan.

The Trajan column has always pleased the artists more than its successor on the actual Piazza Colonna, and its designs were drawn by Giulio Romano and Muziano. Many engravers of the XVI<sup>th</sup> century reproduced the monument in print. Michelangelo, who lived in its neighbourhood, made a drawing, brought forward in a session of the City Council as a project for improving the surroundings. From being a bell tower in the time of Charles V's visit, it became during the XVI<sup>th</sup> century the cynosure of learned and æsthetic minds. It passed through all the stages of the people's growing love for antiquity, becoming an ever-increasing responsibility for the government authorities and the leading scholarly men, who had taken the place of the rare students seen in early engravings walking around its base.

The people, who had already begun to know their Pope, saw in September, 1585, several months after his coronation, a mock statue of an apostle erected on the top of the column, which they persistently called the "Colonna Trajana." The next month the Pope came in person to see the effect of this figure. He must have been well pleased, for, at the same time and on the



same occasion, he expressed his intention of re-uniting the square of Santi Apostoli with the Forum Trajani. In this grandiose conception he was held back by the Palazzo del duca di Sora, and by the elegant little church Santa Maria di Loreto. He relinquished his project, and, as before stated, there arose between the two squares in Sixtus' reign the palace of Cardinal Bonello (now Palazzo della Prefettura).

Christian antiquity was to come next in the pontifical care for monuments. We are not surprised at finding that the old basilicas did come under his attention, for besides the important restoration in Santa Sabina, including his making the steep road leading to the church practicable again, he restored notably the churches of San Pudenziana and San Clemente, of which he opened the side door, and Sant' Adriano.

On a par with classical antiquity, Christian antiquity commenced its conquest of learned minds. It was perfectly natural that the scholars who studied so zealously and patiently the works of the Church fathers, the lives of the Christian martyrs, and the first centuries of Roman supremacy in ecclesiastical history, should rivet their talents on proofs and documents, unused, though at hand, underground, in the nearest vicinity of the Roman walls.

The coming Christian archæology should have all the advantages of a ready system of investiga-



tion and construction, initiated by classical Archæology, which first reached its highest development in the second half of the XVI<sup>th</sup> century. The study of Roman archæology had reached very far, down to investigations of mere trifles, publications of rare fragments of ancient authors, and the imitation of archaic Latin by the most refined who were not satisfied with the phraseology of Cicero, when writing the language of Latium.

The Roman monuments were drawn, measured, and described, inscriptions gathered, classical literature ransacked, testimonials of Greek authors called in, all sources of information drained, every effort made to bring forward the truest image of ancient Rome from the ruins of a city, seen in the dawn of its reviving culture.

While this image appeared clear and sharp behind the potent lens of science, where until then nothing had been but a dull glass in the camera oscura of ignorance, Christian archæology remained in the silence of a library, and, if shining forth in daylight, was tempered by the windows of a council chamber.

The propelling forces of faith, the inspiration drawn from martyrs' heroism, the passion which belongs to everything strongly religious, and the cult for the sacred spots of the earliest Christian times, was now to burst forth in a mass of rays and to illumine the Rome which lay underground. Only modesty and retirement, sharing in the most

cultured form of belief, can explain why Christian archæology remained so long, and to a certain extent still remains, an unassuming science, always retaining something of the silence and the shudder of the catacombs. Religion and science soldered together have clasped that ring of reserve.

Nevertheless, Christian archæologists have from the very beginning adopted modern methods by accepting the latest system of classical archæology. From that standpoint they attracted their colleagues, who were, however, too much attached to their own branch to abandon it for the olive boughs of the learned *cultores martyrum*. Fulvio Orsini, in his career as a leading Roman archæologist, wandered off for a while on the field of Church history. When he finally returned to his first and lasting sympathies, and edited the book *De Triclinio*, left by his friend Ciacconius and treating of the old Roman table-manners, he apologised in a lengthy introduction to Sixtus V for clinging to pagan antiquity and excuses this work as elucidating some passages of the Bible.

Christian archæologists were primarily occupied with publications and critical studies of the written history. In the pontificate of Sixtus V and a few years after, two collections of the martyrs' lives, besides the *Martyrologium* of Baronius, were published in Rome, 1586. Pietro Galesino had, before

Baronius, set his energies to the same subject. In 1591 appeared another book, by Antonio Gallonio, which, from its harrowing descriptions, seems to have been inspired by the cruel frescoes of Santo Stefano Rotondo. I wonder if this author wrote the letter to Pomarancio the painter, inciting him to become utterly realistic in order to impress the public whom he would torture in his turn. . . .

Modernism appears in its most attractive form in the *Roma Sotterranea*, by Bosio. This book came out as late as the beginning of the XVII<sup>th</sup> century, and has not only been modelled after the epoch-making works of classical archæology, but served in turns as a model for the monumental *Roma Sotterranea* of de Rossi and for those who continued in his footsteps.

Even Bosio's dates and years, chronological landmarks of his journeys under the Roman Campagna, do not occur in the pontificate of Sixtus V, but are all some years later.

Discoveries in the catacombs were few and far between since the remarkable date, May 31, 1578, when the news flew over Rome that an underground city had been found at the Via Salaria, until the earliest dates in Bosio's book and his thorough researches. We sometimes find a Christian inscription that had been copied, but none from the catacombs. Vacca in his *Memoirs* hardly mentions Christian antiquities, only touching that science when he speaks of an epitaph

with the name of Pontius Pilatus. Memoria 79 tells us about Matteo da Castello finding on the Aventine leaden vases with Christian coins, and Memoria 115 about a subterranean Christian basilica with mural paintings, near Santa Croce in Gerusalemme.

The devout wayfarers certainly have continued the mediæval custom of visiting a few spots in the catacombs, safe enough to admit humble pilgrims. They may have wandered perhaps to more hidden sanctuaries of the Via Salaria and carried away with them a number of fragile little bottles as relics to their northern homes.

Only one of them, a young Belgian with a thirst for knowledge, penetrated to the unknown land of the new science with a firm purpose to learn. Philippus van Winghen had come to Rome in the last twelve months of Sixtus' rule. Perhaps he had come in the company of his brother Guy Morillon, Bishop of Tournay, who is mentioned as being in the Eternal City at that time. Philippus set to work immediately, studying the Gregorian gallery of maps in the Vatican. His countryman, the famous geographer Abraham Ortelius, waited for his letters to decide several cartographical facts for his work in preparation. In the printed collection of all the letters addressed to Ortelius preserved in England, are many from Italy, as, for instance, one from his countryman Montanus—the author of a world's map, containing a



precious indication of America—and many from the principal Italian geographers. Amongst them was Ignazio Dante, the cherished cartographer of Italy in the XVI<sup>th</sup> century, who could not find grace in the eyes of his own countrymen, and even went down in the estimation of van Winghen. The importance of the northern printing establishments about the time of Sixtus V ought not to be underrated, even in the special branch of Italian geography. Amongst the very rare maps of the Roman Campagna of the XVI<sup>th</sup> century, the one published by Mercator has lately received special consideration in Tomassetti's *La Campagna Romana antica, medievale e moderna*, Roma, 1910. A modern author on the geography of Italy, Deecke, praises the map of Italy made in 1589 by Mercator and Ortelius.

On Christmas Day, 1589, van Winghen sends a long letter to his friend in Antwerp full of active scientific topics of Sixtine Rome, just as a student in our days would write to a Professor at home. The latest prints, maps, and books are mentioned; for instance, a volume of Battista Porta about physiognomy, a favourite subject of former centuries in Italy, where physiognomy can always be studied. He knows Ciacconius, who owned the bust cabinet of small-sized antiquities, though everything was already pawned. The conclusion is a real Christmas Eve expression of homesickness. . . . Italy is beautiful . . . but



Antwerp is better . . . the home which he was never to see again.

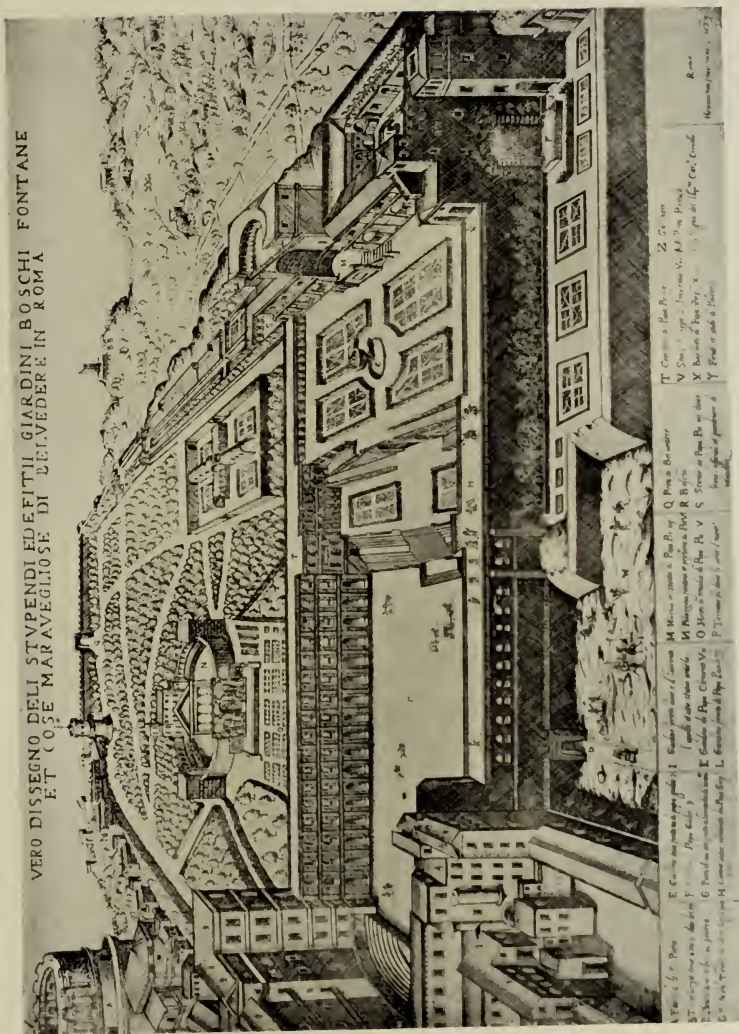
Sixtus V is praised, but Camilla Peretti, who made herself unpopular, does not share in the eulogy in this letter.

On September 1, 1590, another lengthy missive tells about the Pope's demise, van Winghen remarking that the Pope's irritation against the Spanish Ambassador was the real cause of his death. In referring to the anecdote, Sixtus is reported to have said in his last days: "How could I live on, having four fevers—the Spaniards, the brigands, the famine, and natural fever?"

Young van Winghen lived in Rome about two years, and in 1592 was asked by the king of archæology, Justus Lipsius, for information on the latest discoveries. His last letter from here is dated July 1, 1592, in which he adds that he has drawn the map of Latium from the *Galleria delle Carte Geografiche*. Soon after, in the same year, he passed away in Florence, whence the notice of his death reached the Netherlands in a few weeks—a shock to his friends and relatives, and particularly to his brother-in-law, who had parted from him in Rome in August, 1590.

In that same year (1590) the young scholar had walked to a deserted spot outside Rome, where the *Via Salaria* steeply descends to the Anio, to study an old Christian cemetery now recognised as one of the most interesting catacombs: those

VERO DISSEGNO DELI STVPENDI EDEFITII GIARDINI BOSCHI FONTANE  
ET COSE MARAVEGLIOSE DI DEVEDERE IN ROMA



A. Palazzo di S. Pietro E. Camera di S. Pietro F. Camera di S. Pietro G. Camera di S. Pietro H. Camera di S. Pietro I. Camera di S. Pietro  
 B. Palazzo di S. Pietro C. Camera di S. Pietro D. Camera di S. Pietro E. Camera di S. Pietro F. Camera di S. Pietro G. Camera di S. Pietro  
 H. Camera di S. Pietro I. Camera di S. Pietro J. Camera di S. Pietro K. Camera di S. Pietro L. Camera di S. Pietro M. Camera di S. Pietro  
 N. Camera di S. Pietro O. Camera di S. Pietro P. Camera di S. Pietro Q. Camera di S. Pietro R. Camera di S. Pietro S. Camera di S. Pietro  
 T. Camera di S. Pietro U. Camera di S. Pietro V. Camera di S. Pietro W. Camera di S. Pietro X. Camera di S. Pietro Y. Camera di S. Pietro  
 Z. Camera di S. Pietro



of Priscilla, with the double basilica, lately reconstructed on this old foundation; the basilica of St. Silvester, accepted as the spot where St. Peter baptised. Van Winghen prepared himself by reading the volumes of the Church Fathers and of Baronius' *Annals*, those which had appeared before then and to which he had furnished some material. The manuscript of van Winghen, now in the Royal Library in Brussels, notes from the catacombs of Priscilla: sarcophagi, graffiti, monograms, and inscriptions. In October, 1594, Bosio followed his traces and left a more complete description of the territory in his book *Roma Sotterranea*, which contains maps drawn by van Winghen.

This is not the place to dwell on the specific merits of van Winghen and Bosio, or their predecessor Bandini. As to the description of the cemetery of Priscilla and the basilica of St. Silvester, I advise the studious reader to peruse the Italian article of Professor Marucchi in the *Nuova Bullettino di Archeologia Cristiana*, 1908, and all who are in Rome at Christmas time not to miss the 31st December—St. Silvester—at the above-mentioned place, once (*anno* 962) called in a papal bull *in desertis*, but not at all deserted on that day. The territory, called in the papyrus of Monza (VI<sup>th</sup> century) the seat of Petrus, on which a unique example of a double basilica is built on the old founda-

tions, has been presented to the Commissione d'Archeologia Sacra, dependent on the Vatican, by Victor Emanuel III, King of Italy, after the royal couple, both interested in archæology, had visited the excavations on this part of their Villa Savoia. This incident in itself shows the great encouragement given by their Majesties to this science. To those who enjoy philosophising on history, the royal present to a commission connected with the living successor of St. Peter will inspire meditation, and demonstrate that science in Rome is great in unexpected effects.

I have now come to the end of what I had in mind to relate of Sixtine Rome. I realise that I could embellish this single volume and add several others, and that then I should not have exhausted the subject.

In the mining district of historical science I have only descended far enough to bring above ground the material that I wanted. I have seen many long galleries with far lights flickering at their ends. . . . But should I really do a service to my readers on a Roman evening like this San Silvestro if I heaped more wood on their fireplace, and so kept it alight all night, until the morning of the new year?

Sixtine Rome waits to be discovered in the luminous majesty outside. The prophet of the



Bible—for ever furious against Prospero Bresciano—commands the water. With true Latin capriciousness, it escapes to spout forward again between the Dioscure and speeds along to the hills, where the Porta Furba programme is fulfilled. The dome of St. Peter's expands in full glory, and the statues of the Apostles look on over the Rome of many Popes after Sixtus V.

THE END



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